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A Preliminary Survey of Land Tenure in Arkansas

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FOREWORD

The material presented in the following pages was secured through field work done during August, 1917, and August, 1918, supplemented by two brief trips at other times and by investigations carried on from Fayetteville during the intervening University year and the early part of the summer of 1918. As the title states, this is offered as merely a preliminary view of the field. But, since the author was leaving the state, it was deemed advisable to present the results already obtained in the investigation thus brought to an untimely halt.

This circumstance will serve to explain the incompleteness of some of the data (e. g. Table 4), and the provisional and merely suggestive character of many of the statements made. However, it is hoped that even in this form the bulletin may serve to give persons outside the state a juster appreciation of land tenure conditions in Arkansas, and to be of some service in directing the thought of her own citizens along lines of intelligent and helpful effort toward achieving the best possible adjustment of economic relationship dealing with the land.

Since much of the information here presented had to be gleaned from personal contacts in many parts of the state, and since, particularly in the case of local officials and business men, there was a general unwillingness to be quoted, many statements apparently calling for verification, are set down with no citation of authority. The writer can hardly vouch for the absolute correctness of all such views, but, whenever conflicting opinions were discernable, has sought to trace out the different viewpoints and divergent lines of thought and to give each its due weight in the statements here set down.

E. G. NOURSE.

Iowa State College,
October 14, 1918.

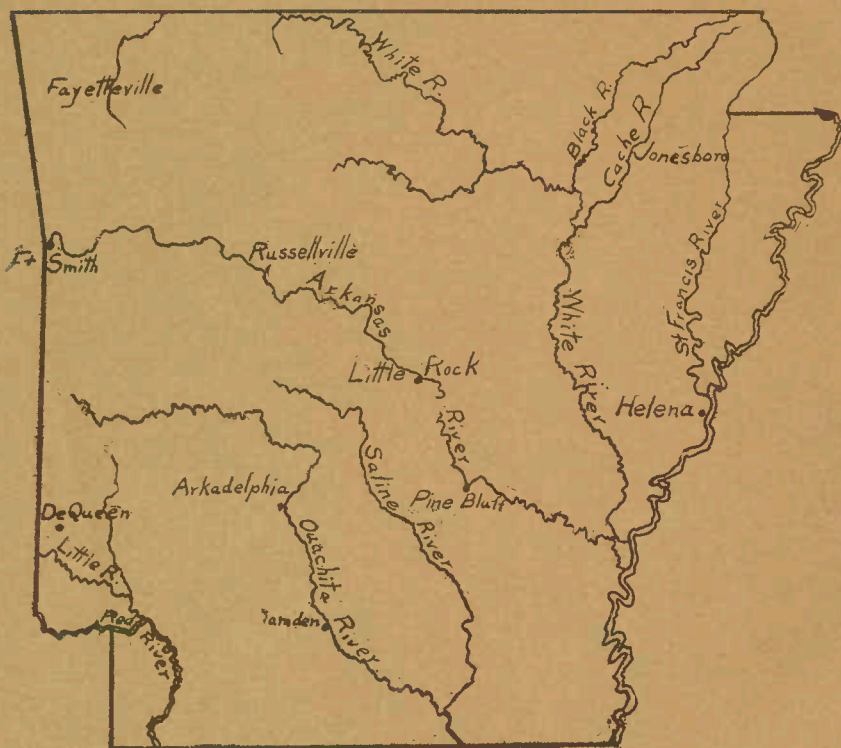


FIG. 1.

A Preliminary Survey of Land Tenure in Arkansas

BY E. G. NOURSE

AREA

The State of Arkansas extends about 240 miles from north to south and averages about 220 miles in width. It has an area of approximately 52,525 square miles, or 33,616,000 acres.

TOPOGRAPHY

From a topographical standpoint the state divides quite evenly into a northwest highland section and a southeast lowland section. The latter is a coastal plain formation, left by the withdrawal of an old arm of the Gulf of Mexico. It is rolling in character, but its highest hills scarcely exceed 500 feet above sea level. The line of demarkation of this coastal plain begins at the Missouri line a little west of the center of Clay County, whence it runs southwest through Little Rock nearly to Arkadelphia. From there it runs nearly west to the Oklahoma boundary approximately in the line of DeQueen. (See map, Fig. 1.)

"To the north and west of this division line the relief is bold and more or less mountainous. This elevated region is cut in two by the valley of the Arkansas. To the south of that valley the mountains are, for the most part, long east-west ridges extending from the lowlands on the east to the Oklahoma line on the west. In several cases these mountains have an elevation of more than two thousand feet above tide. North of the Arkansas River and west of the Coastal Plain section the relief is bold and rugged, but of a type entirely different from that south of the river. The region is an elevated plateau or set of plateaus rather than a mountain. The rocks lie in horizontal beds and are trenched by deep-sided gorges. This region is known in the state as the Boston Mountains; outside of the state it is generally spoken of as the Ozark Mountains. The highest points in

the Boston Mountains are between 2,000 and 3,000 feet above tide level."¹

Besides being washed on the east by the Mississippi River, Arkansas is crossed and crisscrossed by a large number of other rivers and smaller streams. The Mississippi and its tributaries within the state (notably the Arkansas, the Red River, the main stream of the White River, and the Ouachita) are bordered by broad alluvial bottoms much of whose area is subject to overflow during times of high water, unless they are artificially protected. Extensive levees have now provided the necessary protection to most of the desirable agricultural lands, but in some sections no effort is made to use the "first bottom" (which is frequently quite sandy) for tillage purposes. The fields are located on the higher and more fertile "second bottom," while cattle and hogs are turned out to graze in the cane-brakes or wooded river plain during the season of low water. Along the small streams of the highland region, the process is reversed. There the small creek bottoms furnish the most desirable crop land and are used to grow food for the farmer's family, cash crops for market, and winter feed for his stock. The adjoining hills furnish native grasses, mast, sprouts, and bushes enough to feed the farmer's cattle, hogs, goats, sheep, mules and horses for the larger part of the year.

SOILS

"The soils of the alluvial bottoms are chiefly heavy silty loams and clays. Some sandy lands exist along the front lands and the bayous. A high ridge, known as Crowley's Ridge,² is covered by the brown silty loam known as the loess. The north-eastern portion of the Coastal Plains consists of level-topped interstream areas chiefly occupied by gray silty loam soils. The southern portion of the state is occupied by sandy and sandy loam soils. The upland portion of the state is occupied by a considerable variety of soils formed by the weathering of the various underlying rocks. Thus along the northern border the soils are chiefly gray silty or fine sandy loams derived from the siliceous limestones of the Ozark Plateau. The soils of the Boston and Ouachita Mountains are derived from sandstones and shales, and range from stony and sandy loams to heavy loams."³

¹Arkansas Geological Survey, Vol. V, pp. 1-2. The mountains south of the Arkansas River are known as the Ouachita Mountains.

²This extends northward from Helena to Jonesboro and thence in a somewhat northeasterly direction through Greene and Clay counties to the Missouri line.

³Thirteenth Census of the United States, Vol. VI, p. 89.

While there are extensive prairie areas in east central Arkansas (especially Prairie and Arkansas Counties) and small prairie areas in the marl region of the extreme southwest part of the state, the larger part of both highland and lowland sections has been forest covered, and a very considerable portion is still wooded. This is especially true of the river flood plains and the rougher hill lands. There are two National Forest reservations of considerable extent, of which mention will be made shortly. As late as 1896 the State Commissioner of Agriculture asserted that 25,600,000 acres or more than three-fourths of the area of the state was covered with forest. While much cutting has been done since that time, the state still carries an enormous amount of timber. The Thirteenth Census classifies only a little more than half the area of the state as "land in farms" and of that 17,416,000 lists 8,511,000 as "woodland in farms." These facts have considerable bearing upon the question of land tenure and agricultural organization in the state.

CLIMATE AND CROPS

Since nearly all the State of Arkansas lies between the lines of 45 and of 55 inches of annual rainfall, it has sufficient moisture for the raising of all crops except rice. In temperature there is quite a range from the lowland section along the Louisiana line to the mountain section of the northwest corner of the state, but all except eight counties lie below the line of the "200-days frostless season" which is generally regarded as marking the margin of successful cotton culture. In fact, cotton has been raised in commercial quantities in every county in the state, but it has now been practically abandoned in the four most north-westerly counties. Cotton and corn are the leading field crops, though wheat, rice, oats, peanuts, cowpeas, hay and many other forage crops are of great and increasing importance. Tobacco growing fell off nearly two-thirds between 1900 and 1910, and has now practically disappeared as a commercial crop. Sweet potatoes, early Irish potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, and numerous other truck crops are being intensively developed in many sections. The growing of apples, peaches, and small fruits is a prominent industry in the hilly sections of the north and west. Here, too, is a favorable environment for the raising of all kinds of livestock—an industry, however, which is now being stimulated in practically all parts of the state.

SETTLEMENT AND ACQUISITION OF LAND.

Although French explorers began the settlement of Arkansas as early as 1686, the movement of population into the state pro-

ceeded but slowly for the next one hundred and fifty years. A separate territorial government was organized in 1819, and at that date there were probably fewer than 14,000 people within its boundaries, the census of 1820 having shown 14,255. In the next few decades the desire of cotton planters to find fresh lands farther west stimulated immigration, and settlement was rapidly advanced along all the navigable streams, particularly after the establishment of steam boat lines in 1822 and the years just following. The rate of increase was greatest between 1830 and 1840 (more than tripling), but reached a total of 435,450 by 1860, this, in spite of the fact that railroad building did not begin until 1858.

The United States government came into possession of the lands of Arkansas, so far as any other government was concerned, through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The Indian title was quieted by a series of treaties with the Quapaws and Osages during the years 1808 to 1828. There still remained a considerable number of private claims based upon grants made by the French and Spanish viceroys of the territory prior to its cession to the United States. A special Commission, appointed by the President in 1804, undertook to sift these claims and give legal recognition to such equities as they should find. This Commission reported in 1822 that private claims and reservations embraced only 2,533,340 acres¹ and classified the various claims under forty-nine types, mostly defective.² Nearly all of the very large claims were invalidated by the courts in a lengthy process of litigation which lasted nearly fifty years. Hallum states that a grant of 133,165 acres to the Marquis de Maisonrouge was one of the "very few perfect grants ever made by either the kings of France or Spain."³ However, the report of the General Land Office in 1871 (See p. 9), indicates that the total area of private land claims ever confirmed by the United States Government was only 118,451 acres. In any event, much the greater part of the area of Arkansas became a part of the public domain of the United States, to be sold or given away in accordance with our general land laws.

U. S. GOVERNMENT LANDS

The first survey of public lands in Arkansas was begun in 1815, and the first land offices were opened in 1820. Two million acres were at once set aside for the satisfaction of soldiers' bounties growing out of the Revolution and War of 1812. Sales

¹American State Papers, Public Lands, Vol. III, p. 469.

²*Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 377-9.

³Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, p. 27.

to settlers were slow at first, only 54,304 acres having been disposed of by 1828.¹ But with the relinquishment of the last of the Indian hold on the land by the treaty of that year, and with the improvement in river transportation, which took place at about the same time, the process of taking up land was greatly accelerated and went forward briskly until the outbreak of the Civil War. Indeed, in 1860, the census reported 9,573,706 acres in farms.

In addition to the land disposed of to settlers and speculators prior to this time, the United States Government had granted over 9,000,000 acres to the State of Arkansas by a series of acts running from 1827 to 1850. This was in addition to the sixteenth-section school lands, and included swamp land grants, saline lands, grants for internal improvements, public buildings, and the like. An interesting summary of this whole matter is furnished in the report of the General Land Office (1871), as follows:

DISPOSITION OF THE LANDS OF ARKANSAS PRIOR TO JUNE 30, 1871.

Quantity sold	8,235,726.57
Entered under Homestead law.....	1,231,684.31
Granted for military service.....	2,258,146.92
Approved under grants in aid of railways.....	1,924,086.08
Approved swamp land selections.....	7,287,227.83
Granted for internal improvements.....	500,000.00
Donations and grant for schools.....	886,460.00
Donations and grants for universities.....	46,080.00
Located with Indian scrip.....	275,972.64
Saline	46,080.00
Seats of Government and public buildings.....	10,600.00
Granted to individuals and companies.....	139,366.25
Granted to deaf and dumb asylums.....	2,097.43
Confirmed private land claims.....	118,451.12
Unsold and unappropriated, June 30, 1871.....	10,444,740.85

It was not until 1890 that the General Land Office again attempted to present data concerning the amount of public lands remaining unappropriated and unreserved. In that year they reported 4,902,329 acres—a residuum of swamp land and rocky hills which offered little to the homesteader and was reduced only to 3,493,444 acres in the next ten years.

¹American State Papers, Public Lands, Vol. V, p. 147.

GOVERNMENT RESERVATIONS

In 1907-8 a considerable part of the remaining government land was thrown into two National Forest Reserves. After several years' examination, part of these lands were restored to the public domain, in accordance with the government's policy of including in forest reserves only such lands as will produce a greater permanent yield if kept in timber than they would if cleared and put to agricultural uses. As now constituted, the National Forest areas in Arkansas are as follows:

Ozark National Forest.....	291,840 acres
Arkansas National Forest.....	626,746 acres
Total	918,586 acres

This area comprises about 3% of the whole state and is covered with a valuable timber stand, which it is the policy of the Forest Service to maintain, at the same time developing the forage resources of the area for the use of stockmen. "By handling the forests on a sustained annual yield basis the local lumber industry is assured for all time of a timber supply, whereas exploitation which strips the ground would quickly lead to a condition in which there would be no merchantable timber to cut. . . . The creation and maintenance of these two National Forests is a sound economic policy. . . . There are available for farm purposes outside of the National Forests approximately 24,332,000 acres of undeveloped land, most of it much more suitable for agriculture than the best farm land remaining in the National Forests. Even though this entire 918,586 acres of land were immediately opened to settlement, it would not result in more than 5% of it being cultivated. Of the 32,697,414 acres of much better land available for agriculture, less than 25% is being used for farm purposes. Should the lands within the Arkansas Forests be restored to the public domain it would be a case of exchanging a large area of splendid forest land for a small area of very questionable agricultural land. It is apparent that extensive agricultural development in Arkansas in the future must come through intensive use of the land already patented, rather than by adding to the acreage of "lean lands" by securing rocky timbered hillsides and ridges from the Government."¹

¹From a personal letter to the writer from the Acting District Forester, October 17, 1917. The figure 24,332,000 acres of potential agricultural lands is too high, as it is obtained by simply subtracting the public domain, National Forests, and improved land in farms from the total area of the state. Several million acres should be deducted on account of land in townsites, mineral lands, and waste land in private ownership in farms but not suitable for agricultural uses. This discrepancy, however, is not so great as to alter the general proposition made in the quotation.

Besides the forest reservations there have been withdrawn by order of the President, in accordance with the act of June 25, 1910, (amended in 1912), 22,354 acres of land for water power sites. The state possesses extensive water power resources, and it is to be hoped that in the near future this modest reservation will be greatly augmented by further withdrawals or the acquisition of sites now in private hands.

THE MARGIN OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP.

In general it may be said that the land still remaining in the hands of the Government is in the roughest part of the state, where the soil is rocky and where means of communication are inadequate. There is still a small amount of swamp land subject to public entry, but the development of extensive drainage operations, especially in the northeastern part of the state, has caused the majority of such lands as are capable of drainage to be taken up during recent years.

The public lands, which amounted to 316,600 acres on July 1, 1917,¹ are scattered through sixty-two of the seventy-five counties of the state, ranging from two acres in Hempstead County to 48,360 acres in Van Buren County—10.3 per cent of its total area. The accompanying table shows the acreage in such counties as have 2,500 acres or more of public land within their boundaries. In another column is shown the distribution of Forest Reserve land in the 22 counties in which it is found. It may be added that the Ozark National Forest is located in the Boston Mountains and the Arkansas National Forest in the Ouachita Mountains. No railroad enters the boundaries of Newton County, and Van Buren, Scott, Montgomery, Fulton and Sharp have but meagre railway facilities.

TABLE 1.
GOVERNMENT LAND IN ARKANSAS.
(*Public Domain and Forest Reserve.*)

County	Ozark National Forest. Public Domain	
	Acres.	Acres.
Baxter	20,485	16,547
Cleburne	2,267	10,240
Crawford	4,499	4,800
Franklin	10,395	6,560
Stone	47,196	21,201

¹This was reduced by 26,232 acres during the last year, leaving 290,368 unreserved and unappropriated on June 30, 1918.

Johnson	37,921	15,000
Newton	51,498	12,498
Pope	107,215	6,760
Searcy	7,967	12,122
Van Buren	2,197	48,360
Washington	200	6,726

Arkansas National Forest

Garland	63,836	10,331
Howard	762	2,644
Logan	15,672	6,280
Montgomery	88,995	15,096
Perry	39,923	680
Polk	140,067	10,731
Saline	44,753	1,494
Scott	157,987	21,000
Sebastian	6,933	2,720
Yell	65,464	4,720
Pike	2,354	3,073

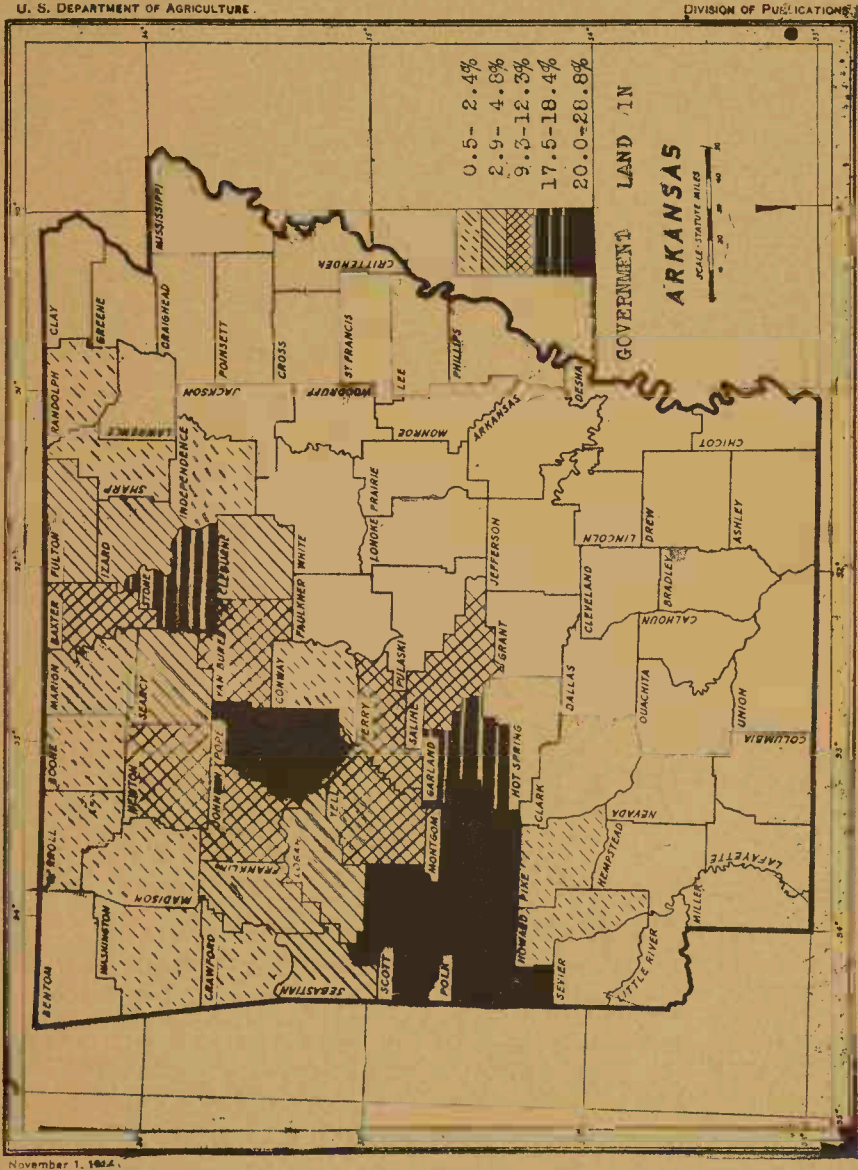
Boone		2,698
Fulton		13,960
Izard		16,171
Marion		8,124
Randolph		3,720
Sharp		9,160
Independence		4,080
Other counties		19,104

Totals	918,586	316,600
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Forest Reserve.....	918,586	acres
Public Domain.....	316,600	acres
Water Power Sites.....	22,354	acres

Total	1,257,540	acres
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The data which are presented in Table 1 are also shown graphically in Fig. 2. This map shows quite plainly that the chief areas of land not suited to private use coincide with the two mountain sections. If it were possible to plot these data by townships, they would show a relatively high percentage of non-farm land in the north end of Sevier, Howard and Pike Counties and in the west part of Hot Spring County, whereas those counties along the Arkansas River would have a much higher percentage of such land in the end of the county away



from the river and a much lower percentage in the lowland portion than is indicated on this map. The result would be to show two areas separated by the river bottoms and adjoining hills, instead of the one continuous shaded area as in this map. There is only one county in the Coastal Plain section of the State which has as much as 1,000 acres of land remaining in the public domain. This is Mississippi County, with 1,000 acres of swamp land still "unappropriated and unreserved."

STATE LANDS.

Mention has already been made of the fact that title to well over a quarter of the area of the state (9,244,633 acres) had been passed by Congress to the State of Arkansas in a series of grants the first of which was made in 1827 and the last in 1850. With the collapse of the State Real Estate Bank in 1842, several hundred thousand acres more passed into the hands of the state government. Finally, the state has become the reversionary claimant to more than a million acres of land the title to which has been forfeited through the non-payment of taxes. This last class of state land has come from several sources. Many land holders were unable to keep up their tax payments through the distressed period of Civil War and reconstruction; others who either completed homestead entries or purchased land of the poorer sort were unable to make a living during the years of low prices in the late seventies and the eighties. Some of these persons abandoned their land, others stayed as long as they might, while title passed to the state and until it passed to a new owner who cared to dispossess them. This last class is analagous to the Kansas or Nebraska homesteaders whose farms were foreclosed by Eastern mortgage holders during the same period.

It has been the general intention to dispose of these state lands as rapidly as possible. The terms upon which this has been done, however, have differed for the different classes of land and according to the time at which the arrangements were made. For land acquired up to 1850, a policy of sale at a moderate price, in substantial conformity with the United States government land policy of the time, was adopted. Swamp, saline, and internal improvement lands have been sold at \$.50 to \$1.25 per acre and seminary lands at \$1.00 per acre. Real estate bank lands, having been taken over by the state at an appraised valuation, have been offered to the public at the same price. Lands forfeited because of delinquent taxes have been and still are offered to the highest bidder. But when no bid of as much as the overdue taxes and costs is forthcoming, such lands revert to the state and are disposed of in accordance with a "donation"

law passed in 1868.¹ This is a sort of state homestead law, which provides for the "donation" of 160 acres of such land "to any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years and is a citizen of the United States, or who has filed his declaration of intention to become such." Fees amounting to \$10.50 are charged for the making of a donation entry and another fee of \$1.00 for a deed of patent. The donee is required to build a residence on the land, reside there for a period of three years, and clear, fence, and cultivate at least five acres of the tract.² After proving up in accordance with these terms, the donee receives a deed from the state in evidence that "the land has been regularly forfeited by the original owner, and that the State had properly donated its right thereto" to him. This means, of course, a quit-claim rather than a guaranteed title.

The state makes no effort to verify the lists of forfeited lands as turned in by the various county clerks. As a result, many lands not legally forfeited are placed on the state list and donated or sold. The State Lands Commissioner expresses a doubt that the state actually has good title to more than 8 or 10 per cent of the land nominally forfeited to it. Since the rightful owner may come forward at any time and assert his title, and since the holder from the state has no recourse in such an event, the state lands are a source of constant controversy and frequent hardship.³

While State lands have gone to settlers for farming purposes to some extent, the great bulk of these lands have been granted to railroads or levee projects or have been sold to timber companies. Furthermore, many of the lands granted in aid of internal improvements have been sold to timber companies in large blocks. Several legislative assemblies, particularly during the 70's, were active in making railway grants. Those passed in 1877 and 1879 were contingent upon the completion and operation of the railroad to which the grant was made, and, although the time was extended in several instances, the state aimed to

¹Act No. LXVIII, Act of 1868 (subsequently amended).

²The donee may commute his resident and cultivation requirements by the payment of \$1.25 per acre and state land may still be purchased by any person and in any quantity at that price.

³The writer has learned of many cases where an owner, finding his property incorrectly placed on the delinquent tax list, has allowed matters to take their course. He is thus relieved of the payment of taxes, and if the land is donated, sits back and watches some deluded settler clear and improve his land. Later, in some cases after ten or fifteen years, when such an actual owner desires to use the land or to sell it, he comes forward with his old tax receipt for the year in which the property has been erroneously forfeited and dispossesses the present occupier. Several State Land Commissioners have urged a change in this law, almost everyone agrees that it should be amended, but nothing is done.

assure itself in these cases of some tangible returns for the land thus disposed of. This appears to have been a reaction from the policy pursued somewhat earlier and under which considerable tracts of land passed out of the hands of the state without any benefit being received in return. A notable case in point is that of the Mississippi, Ouachita, and Red River Railroad. Under date October 10, 1873, the state patented to this road 85,828.18 acres of lands selected by them from lands granted to the state under the Swamp Land Act of 1850. As a matter of fact, the selectors classified this land not by actual inspection but from the vantage point of a whiskey keg in the county seat. As a result, the nominal swamp lands granted to the Mississippi, Ouachita and Red River Railroad embraced considerable tracts of the highest (and therefore agriculturally most available) land in the counties where it was located, viz., Nevada, Columbia, Clark, Union, Ouachita, Calhoun, Bradley, Ashley, and Drew. A second patent shortly added another 257,211 acres to this grant, making a total of 343,039.5 acres. The railroad company spent about a million dollars and graded the road-bed and laid ties on a considerable part of the eastern portion of their proposed line (which was to have extended from Luna Landing on the Mississippi River to Texarkana), but went down in the railway panic which followed 1873. The company had never operated a single train and many people have supposed that for this reason the lands which they had received from the state should have reverted to the donor. Indeed, litigation aimed to get these lands out of the hands of the promoters of the company or those to whom they had transferred them have been continued almost to the present time, but without success. The fact of the matter is that the lands were granted outright in purchase of the stock of the company and the title was therefore never contingent upon the completion and operation of the road. While this transaction has been regarded by many people as a bare-faced steal, it appears to belong rather in the category of wild-cat transportation development which characterized the period in which it occurred. The expenditure of so much of its own money by the railroad company in bona fide development work seems to indicate that they were operating in good faith though not perhaps with the best of business judgment.¹ It should, however, perhaps, be further noted that the 283,000 acres of this tract which have been in litigation have become the nu-

¹On the other hand, an east-and-west road through the southern part of the state, such as the one then proposed, would have done much to facilitate the development of that region, which still suffers from a lack of any direct line of communication. A part of the old line was put in operation during the 80's, but, when Jay Gould acquired the Cotton Belt he viewed such a line as a dangerous competitor and accordingly bought it up and made of it a stub line terminating at Warren.

cleus of some of the great timber company holdings now to be found in south Arkansas.

Somewhat similar is the action of the State in granting both forfeited lands and lands which had been ceded to it by the Federal Government, in aid of local improvements, mainly levee boards. For example, the St. Francis Levee Board became, in accordance with legislation passed in 1893, the recipient of all state lands lying within its district with the exception of sixteenth-section school lands. The levee board in turn sold this land in large tracts to timber companies at a low price, thereby securing funds for the levee and ditch work by which it proposed to make the region available for agriculture. This movement will be referred to later in connection with the discussion of timber holdings.

State lands were in the custody of the State Auditor until the year 1868, at which time the office of Commissioner of Immigration and State Lands was created. This official was authorized to go to other parts of the United States or to foreign countries for the purpose of inducing immigration or of making arrangements with immigration societies. This reflects the intention of the state to get the land as rapidly as possible into the hands of actual farmers. An excursion of Northern editors into the state was arranged in 1889 as a means of attracting the attention of prospective settlers to the free or cheap lands available in Arkansas. Likewise circulars descriptive of the land possibilities of the state were sent out in considerable quantities and an extensive state exhibit made at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. About this same time a number of immigration or colonization societies were established in various parts of the state, but the panic of '93 and the following years tended to discourage settlement. A State Commissioner of Mines, Manufactures, and Agriculture was added to the list of state officials in 1889, and this officer has taken over the function of stimulating immigration or informing prospective settlers as to the agricultural, timber, or mining resources of the state. The Land Commissioner's office is now concerned merely with the custody of state lands and the conveyancing of them to purchasers or donees.

The state's land holdings are not so listed as to make it practicable to secure accurate statistics as to their quantity and location, but the Commissioner of State Lands estimates that the total holdings as now listed amount to 275,000 or 300,000 acres although, as previously mentioned, probably not more than 20,000 to 25,000 acres of these entries would show a perfect title for

the state. These lands are widely scattered in relatively small tracts, but the bulk of them consist of quite inferior lands in northern and western Arkansas.

RAILROAD LANDS

Under its general policy of voting alternate sections of land along the proposed right of way of railroads as subsidy for their construction, Congress, in 1853, voted grants of land amounting to 1,160,667 acres to the Cairo and Fulton Railway, 550,525 acres to the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway, and 438,647 acres to the Memphis and Little Rock Railway. There were subsequent grants to all three of these companies and to the Iron Mountain Railway, which it was estimated would yield a total of 4,878,149.14 acres if full advantage had been taken of them. The actual patenting of land to the companies, however, was contingent upon their meeting certain requirements in the matter of construction and operation of their lines. Several acts supplementary to the original acts extended the time within which these requirements could be complied with, but the selections actually approved by the Government under these grants amounted to only 2,298,869.62 acres by 1875, and relatively small additions (263,266 acres) have been made since that date, although occasional small tracts have been located by the companies even within the last year or two.¹

Several roads which were constructed at a later date and were not beneficiaries of Federal land grants have been purchasers of land contiguous to their right of way, which lands have been used for developmental or speculative purposes. Even the Iron Mountain, which through the merger of the Cairo and Fulton and the Little Rock and Fort Smith with its original lines² became by far the largest holder of railroad lands, has also made some purchases. The report of this company for 1916 shows the "number of acres originally granted, purchased, etc.," as 2,564,147.19 acres and the "number of acres unsold, June 30th, 1916," as 426,629.18 acres. The holdings of this company are practically all timber lands (See p. 44). They profess that all their land are on the market, and the report referred to shows 11,031.90 acres sold during the preceding year at an average price of \$6.97. These lands are mostly sold to timber companies and are not suitable for agricultural use until their timber has been removed.

¹A grant to the Atlantic and Pacific Railway, nominally in Missouri, also extended over a short distance into Arkansas in northern Benton and Carroll counties.

²The Memphis and Little Rock Railway was taken over by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific. Its Government lands amounted to only 184,657.33 acres.

PRIVATE LAND TENURE

The preceding pages have given a brief general account of the character of the state and of the process by which Arkansas lands have come into the hands of private owners. We shall now pass on to examine in more detail the conditions of tenure as they exist at the present time. In order to present this matter most clearly, we shall divide the state into four zones or districts, each of which is fairly uniform within its own boundaries and also possesses characteristic peculiarities which distinguish it from other zones. The discussion of these separate zones, however, should be preceded by a few words concerning the state as a whole.

The Thirteenth Census shows 51.8 per cent of the land area of the state included in farms and 46.4 per cent of this farm area improved. This means that only 24.0 per cent of the area of the state is classed as improved farm land, but it means also that almost every farmer is in a position to increase his crop acres within the limits of his present holdings. Furthermore, it means that many more farms may be carved out of the area not cropped at present but suitable for tillage as soon as timber has been removed and, in many cases, drainage provided. Between 1900 and 1910 the land in farms increased 779,356 acres, but the improved acreage increased 1,122,519 acres. This same movement has continued strongly since 1910, aided by the completion of important drainage works and stimulated by the war demand for farm products. It is probable that the next census will show increases in both these figures equal to those of the previous decade. In other words, Arkansas is still in the developmental stage, and will be so for some years yet to come.

Somewhat paradoxically, however, for a state with so much unused land, that development is by intensive rather than extensive types of agriculture. We do not see large tracts of land taken from the unused area to be devoted to relatively hasty and superficial culture, as has been the rule in the Mississippi Valley states farther north. Instead, we see small farms or single fields encroaching upon timber, swamp, or hillside with a relatively intensive sort of farming—cotton, fruit, truck, or general farming. The average farm unit is small and apparently growing smaller, while big farms adequately equipped and vigorously managed are few—but not growing fewer. Indeed, they are probably increasing in number, but of that more will be said later.

The average sized farm for the whole state was 93.1 acres in 1900 and dropped to 81.1 in 1910, while the average of im-

proved acres per farm fell from 38.9 to 37.6. This corresponds pretty well with the settled custom of regarding 40 acres as the ordinary family cotton patch, and the typical character of such a farm is shown further by the figures which classify all farms according to size, in which both the mode and the median fall in this same group. Of a total of 214,678 farms in the state, 74,983 are in the group "20 to 49 acres," whereas 111,242 are of that size or smaller (i. e., 3,564 more than one-half of all farms of the state are below 50 acres in size). The complete figures are shown below. They show also a remarkable absence of farms of more than 500 acres. The reader, however, should remember the method used by the Census Office, which classifies each tenant's holding as a separate farm. These figures for farms do not, therefore, tell the whole story as to holdings of farm land. The questions both of plantation farming and of timber holdings will receive separate treatment farther on.

ARKANSAS FARMS CLASSIFIED BY SIZE.

	1910	1900	
Number of all farms.....	214,678	178,694	+35,984
Farms of less than 3 acres	114	529	— 415
3 to 9 acres.....	6,270	3,945	+ 2,325
10 to 19 acres.....	29,875	20,191	+ 9,684
20 to 49 acres.....	74,983	55,332	+19,651
50 to 99 acres.....	45,373	38,595	+ 6,778
100 to 174 acres.....	39,353	42,007	— 2,654
175 to 259 acres.....	11,135	10,569	+ 566
260 to 499 acres.....	6,014	5,871	+ 143
500 to 999 acres.....	1,163	1,239	— 76
1,000 acres and over.....	398	416	— 18

It is significant to notice in connection with these figures that the increase in number of farms during the decade 1900 to 1910 was most marked in the group of "20 to 49 acres" and is well marked in all but one of the groups below 100 acres, whereas the number of large farms shows a distinct falling off. It may be added further that negroes predominate on the smaller holdings whereas the larger farms are worked by whites in the majority of cases. Thus in 1900 there were 16,273 negroes in the 10 to 19 acre group as against 13,602 whites; and 31,156 negroes as against 43,272 whites in the 20 to 49 acre group. But on farms of 50 acres and over there were 90,003 whites and only 13,433 negroes.

While a few of the river counties show ratios as high as eight or ten negroes to one white farmer, the proportion for the state as a whole is strongly in favor of the white (151,085 to 63,593). The large majority of these white farmers, likewise, are American born, only 2,458 being of foreign origin (148,627 native).

If we turn to the state figures on tenancy, it appears that 45.4 per cent of all farms were operated by tenants in 1900 and that this had increased to 50.0 per cent in 1910. The percentage for whites was 35.1 in 1900 and 38.6 in 1910, while 74.4 per cent of all negro farmers were tenants in 1900 and 76.9 per cent were tenants in 1910.

NORTH ARKANSAS.

Owing to differences in climate, character of the population, and type of agriculture, and also as a result of the fact that the railroads of Arkansas do not make a railway net that spreads evenly over the state, geographic sectionalism is inevitable. This is clearly reflected in the daily speech of the people, who habitually refer to "Northwest Arkansas," "South Arkansas," and others up to the number of eight, as though these sections were recognized civil divisions of the state. Our purpose will apparently be best served, if we simply make four divisions—North, West, South, and East Arkansas. The first two of these sections (north and west) coincide roughly with the two parts of the highland division of the state which was discussed earlier in this bulletin (p. 5), while the other two (south and east) are included in the Coastal Plains area.

North Arkansas embraces the section of the state north of the valley of the Arkansas River from the Oklahoma line to Little Rock and thence following a line northeastward, above Lonoke and Prairie Counties, up the White River and its branch, the Black. This is primarily a section of hill farms and of small farmers. On its eastern and southern fringes it runs into river bottom land and contains a considerable number of cotton plantations. For this reason the outer ring of counties (Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Pope, Conway, Faulkner, White, Independence, and Lawrence) has been omitted from the statistics presented in Table 2. The reader should bear in mind that conditions in the hilly northern or western portions of these counties are substantially similar to those found in the group which we are about to examine in detail.

TABLE 2.
LAND TENURE IN NORTH ARKANSAS

	Benton	Carroll	Boone	Marion	Baxter	Fulton	Sharp	Izard	Stone	Cleburne	Van Buren	Searcy	Newton	Madison	Washington	Average
Average size farm.....	93.2	116.9	111.5	98.6	113.4	125.5	121.8	110.9	138.3	103.3	117.8	120.6	121.0	133.3	100.8	115.1
Acres improved	51.5	50.5	51.5	37.8	38.4	43.7	47.3	43.6	33.9	34.3	38.4	34.6	29.6	46.4	52.9	42.3
Farms over 500 acres.....	19	16	18	3	7	8	26	17.	16.	10.	14.	16.	3.	27.	15.	14.3
Per cent of all farms.....	.4	.7	.8	.2	.4	.4	1.2	.7	1.1	.6	.6	.8	.2	1.0	.3	.6
Typical size farm.....	80-120	80-160	100-160						120-160	100-160	160	120-160	160	120-160	100	
Smallest size common..	25-40	40	40						40	40-80	40	40	40	40	30-40	
Largest holdings	500-1000	500-4000	1000						2000	800-1100; 71000†	3000	10000†	15000†	2700 12000†	320-1000	
Per cent tenants 1910.....	21.6	24.8	30.3	45.8	54.8	32.1	34.5	38.4	27.8	27.5	24.1	26.3	25.0	25.3	23.3	29.4
Percent tenants 1900.....	26.3	28.6	35.3	38.2	37.5	25.2	32.5	38.0	33.5	25.9	18.8	32.3	16.9	22.3	25.2	29.1
Per cent tenants now (estimated)	20.0	22.0	30.0						25.0	25.0	24.0	23.0	25.0	25.0	21.0	

†Indicates timber holdings.

Conditions in the lowland section will be discussed later, in connection with plantation tenure, which is characteristic of east Arkansas.

The census figures presented in Table 2 show the average size of farms ranging from 93.2 in Benton County to 138.3 in Stone County. In view of the fact that most of these lands are low priced, this means a farm even smaller from the business standpoint than is indicated by its physical size. In Stone County the average value is the lowest in the group (and indeed in the state)—\$4.71. This multiplied by the average size of farm, 138.3 acres, gives an average farm value of \$631.39. Figured on this basis 13 of the 15 counties in this group ranged in average farm land value from \$528.88 (Izard) to \$1,253.17 (Carroll), while Washington County, the only one to approach the Benton County figure (\$2,616.12) averages \$2,119.82. If now, these figures be read in connection with those showing the percentage of tenancy (averaging less than 30 per cent for the whole group and running as low as 21.6 per cent in one county) we can see how distinctly this is a region of small owners. This is further manifested by the small number of farms of 500 acres, which make up little more than half of one per cent of all the farms in this section.

While this whole region is predominately one of general farming, the two western counties in the group have very considerable areas of orchard land. Likewise, strawberries, tomatoes, and sweet and Irish potatoes are important crops in several of these counties, particularly along the western and eastern edges of the district, where transportation facilities are best. As we go eastward and southward also, we get more and more into the cotton country, though none of the 15 counties listed in our table is an important producer. Of the border counties, Pope, Conway, Faulkner, White, and Lawrence are the only ones whose production of cotton exceeded 15,000 bales in 1915. The interior of this section is a great timber country but with considerable zinc and other mineral interests. All the rougher portion of the territory—which means most of it—is well adapted to livestock growing.

These facts serve readily to explain much of the small-farm character of this region—but not all. The farmer who raises a horticultural crop or cotton has a family-farm when he has 40 to 50 acres in cultivation.¹ With land as cheap as it has been,

¹A survey of 50 orchard farms in Washington county made by Mr. A. D. McNair of the Office of Farm Management of the U. S. Department of Agriculture shows an average acreage of 76.5. This average is somewhat distorted by the presence of a few rather large tracts, notably one of 447 acres, which, however, has only 25 acres in orchard. The average number of acres in orchard on the whole 50 farms was 34.0 acres. These figures were for the crop year 1916.

it is natural that most farms should be one-man enterprises and that hired labor should be used but little.¹ The operator of a general farm, on the other hand, finds it difficult to handle a large crop acreage on the rough land, which is characteristic of this region, and accordingly, in many cases, intensifies his operations by putting five, ten, or perhaps twenty acres of his land in orchard, berries, tomatoes, potatoes, or the like. Others have a comparatively small area of forage, grain, and food crops in the creek bottoms and graze their livestock on the unfenced wooded lands.

But even with all these explanations for the smallness of holdings, the patent fact is that they are too small for desirable results as measured either by farming methods or farmers' income. As a banker in this section put it, "I don't see how these small farmers live. We made a loan today to one whose farm is only 26 acres. He has a little orchard and a few cows, but I don't see how the family gets by." As a matter of fact, a considerable number of these small holders are not farmers at all in the strictly business sense. They raise the larger part of their food on their small places but look to "public work" in the sawmills, mines, or stavenmills, or to construction work on the highways or railroads as a source of cash income. Many of them pick fruit or cotton during the season, sometimes travelling a considerable distance to reach such work. Those who have standing timber cut cross ties, posts, stave or header bolts, and fire-wood; those who have no timber of their own, hire out to others to do such work.

For much of this section the normal trend of land tenure would be in the direction of larger holdings and the growth of a livestock industry on an adequately equipped basis. This would mean holdings of about 640 to 2,000 or 3,000 acres of this rough land. Such a development is actually taking place here and there in a very limited number of cases, largely through the initiative of some outsider or of a man from the nearby town. However, this consolidating tendency is about balanced by a counter tendency to cut up places of 160 to 300 or 400 acres into smaller tracts, sometimes for sale to newcomers and sometimes to make a division among heirs of the former owner.

There is no considerable immigration into this section though much unused land is available and might profitably be opened up

¹In this connection it should be remembered that neither negroes nor foreign immigrants have come into this section in appreciable numbers. In 1910, of the 15 counties in Table 2, 9 of them had 10 negro farmers or less and the one with the largest number had only 47, while only 3 of the 15 counties had over 30 foreign-born farmers. The highest number was 109, and this was in a county having 4,560 native-born white farmers.

if persons with suitable experience and sufficient capital were to come and develop a livestock industry. Quantities of rough land can be had for \$5.00 an acre or even a little less. Developed lands are held at prices which were, prior to the war-time advance in farm products, rather high as measured against productivity. The range of land prices is wide but runs from about \$15.00 to \$100 in most instances. Even the best farms seldom command more than \$125 except in the case of orchard land, which at its maximum will about double that figure.

As already mentioned, practically all the usable land in this section has passed out of the hands of the government and the railways. The timber companies have likewise practically disappeared from the older and better developed parts of this region, but from Madison county east numerous holdings of timbered or cut-over lands are to be found. Since these are moderate in size and are located in sections where there is as yet no considerable pressure for the expansion of farm area, they do not create a problem such as is found in other parts of the state, and which will be discussed later.

OWNERSHIP IN CARROLL COUNTY.

A tolerably accurate impression of the conditions in this whole district may be secured from a detailed scrutiny of a typical county, and for this purpose Carroll County will be taken. It presents all the salient features of the group except that it has no cotton lands. On the other hand, it does not present extreme conditions of either intensive horticultural use of the land or of extensive livestock growing or unused timber lands. Its transportation facilities are better than those of many of its neighbor counties but inferior to the best in this group. In 1910 the census classified the land of Carroll County as follows:

TABLE 3.

FARMS AND FARM PROPERTY IN CARROLL COUNTY.

Approximate land area—acres.....	410,240
Land in farms—acres.....	277,748
Improved land in farms—acres.....	119,897
Woodland in farms—acres.....	124,867
Other unimproved land in farms—acres.....	32,964
Per cent of land area in farms.....	67.7
Per cent of farm land improved.....	43.2

Average values:

All property per farm—dollars.....	2,090
Land and buildings per farm—dollars.....	1,585
Land per acre—dollars.....	10.72

Number of farms, classified by size:

Under 3 acres.....	5
3 to 9 acres.....	61
10 to 19 acres.....	95
20 to 49 acres.....	401
50 to 99 acres.....	598
100 to 174 acres.....	858
175 to 259 acres.....	235
260 to 499 acres.....	107
500 to 999 acres.....	12
1000 acres and over.....	4

Tenure:

Number of farms operated by owners.....	1,779
Per cent of all farms.....	74.9
Number of farms operated by tenants.....	590
Per cent of all farms.....	24.8
Number of farms operated by managers.....	7

Form of tenancy:

Share tenants.....	512
Share cash tenants.....	7
Cash tenants.....	51
Tenure not specified.....	20

Obviously, the census figures do not tell the whole story of how the land of a given county is held. In the case before us only about two-thirds of the land area of the county is embraced within farms. In order to ascertain how the remainder of this land is held an analysis was made of all titles in the county. This shown about 3,500 descriptions of property in the hands of 3,074 owners, besides 120 acres held (in two parcels) by the State and 2,356 acres (51 parcels) still held by the United States Government. The latter consists almost entirely of 40 acre tracts of very inferior land widely scattered over the county. The holdings of the 3,074 private owners (which contrast with the 2,376 farms classified in Table 3) are grouped as follows:

40 acres or less.....	694
41 to 160 acres.....	1903
161 to 500 acres.....	434
Over 500 acres.....	43

Of the 43 holders of large tracts only 12 have more than 1,000 acres, and of these only 3 exceed 2,000. There is only one

timber holding of noticeable size. This includes 780 acres in Carroll county, but the same company also holds timbered and cut-over lands in adjoining counties, probably to a total of about 5,000 acres. Likewise two or three owners of large tracts near the edge of this county are known to own additional land near by. One such case is that of a livestock grower who has 700 acres in Carroll county but about twice that amount in Madison—a very suitable holding. One other case of some interest is that of a holder of some 1600 acres of land bought about two years ago at a low price and now being developed with adequate capital into an excellent livestock enterprise. This tract was purchased from an absentee owner who is still the largest single landholder in the county but whose properties are for sale at a reasonable price. Of the other large holders three or four are real estate dealers, four have their holdings widely scattered in small parcels, which have been acquired at tax sales or otherwise upon a low-price investment basis. A number of these other large tracts are likewise held for speculative purposes without much use being made of the land. It may be remembered in this connection that the census enumerators in 1910 found only 16 farms of 500 acres or more in this county.

TENANCY.

Northern Arkansas is distinctly a region of land-owning farmers. A glance at Table 2 will show that in ten of these fifteen counties the percentage of tenancy is 30.3 or less, and that in only one case does it exceed 38.4 per cent. Furthermore, in the better counties, such as Benton, Washington, Carroll, etc., the proportion of non-owning farmers showed substantial decrease in the decade between 1900 and 1910, and in most cases well-informed persons believe that this same tendency is continuing.¹ On the other hand, several counties show an increase in tenancy from 1900 to 1910, and in most cases this occurred in those counties in which the proportion of tenants are already relatively high. The causes for this are not altogether clear, but it is probably to be explained by a certain contraction in the agriculture of those

¹This, of course, runs contrary to the general expectation that a marked increase in land values will be accompanied by an increase in tenancy. While the value of land in all three of the counties mentioned more than doubled during the decade, its average at the end of the period was only \$10.72 in Carroll County, \$21.03 in Washington County, and \$28.07 in Benton County. Furthermore, much of this increase occurred through the development of horticultural lands, which in the nature of the case are not suited to tenant operation. While this advance in value was taking place in the hands of those who already owned lands or of outsiders who bought with a view to orchard development, many persons of small means were finding during this period that the general advance in prices of farm products enabled them to buy small farms in the lower priced sections. This latter type of ownership is not, however, necessarily an unmixed blessing. (See p. 73)

counties which was taking place during the period. Carroll, Boone, Madison, Marion, Newton, Fulton, Sharp, and Washington counties lost in population, and Carroll, Boone, Madison, Newton, Searcy, and Fulton showed a loss in the number of farms during the decade. This is generally explained as a movement into Oklahoma in response to the lure of that state's land and oil boom. Many such emigrants continued to own the land they had formerly farmed in Arkansas, and, by renting it to others, tended to increase the percentage of tenant farmers here. When they sold their land upon leaving it is quite likely that it tended to fall into the hands of persons who already possessed at least as much land as they were themselves able to utilize. They would rent it whenever tenants could be secured, and it is probable that in some of these counties the rate of tenancy would have risen even higher had it been possible to secure new migrants. As one large land owner said, "There's many a piece of land that 'lies out' simply because you can't find anyone to rent it." The meagreness of railway and improved highway facilities is the principal cause of this condition.

A second suggestion of a somewhat similar nature is that the development of the mining interests in several of these counties has been the cause of increased tenancy. Persons at a distance have been induced to purchase considerable areas of land on the basis of its mineral possibilities. Naturally as much as possible of this land would be rented for such agricultural use as could be made of it, sometimes, no doubt, to the previous owners. On the whole it seems probable that the next census will not show such increases in tenancy percentages as are revealed in Table 2. The better counties will probably show a slight decrease in the proportion of renters.

FORM OF TENANCY.

The prevailing form of tenancy in this section is share-renting. According to the census in 1910 the number of cash tenants was only about 10 per cent of the number of share tenants in twelve of these counties, but dropped to about 2 per cent in Searcy county and rose to 20 and 31 per cent respectively in Boone and Newton counties. In the horticultural counties, strawberry lands are very commonly rented for cash, generally \$4.00 to \$5.00 per acre. Farther east, and quite generally throughout the state hay land is rented for cash, mostly \$2.00 to \$2.50 per acre.

Under share-renting the landlord gets one-third of the product in the case of general farm crops except in the case of especially good bottom lands where he may demand and be able

to secure one-half of the crop. In both these cases the tenant furnishes his own stock and implements. In those few cases where the landlord supplies this equipment, his share of the crop is one-half. In the eastern part of this district, where we get into the cotton country, the conventional renting contract of "a fourth and a third" obtains, but the exploitative conditions of store-furnishing, such as are found in South and East Arkansas and elsewhere in the cotton belt are not prevalent. Except in the case of strawberry lands (which are generally taken under a four-year lease) the renting contract is an oral agreement running from year to year at the option of the parties. Obviously this means that permanent improvements on the landlord's part and long-time programs of soil improvement or herd building on the part of the tenant are largely precluded.

The average hill farmer dreads to have a lien on his land and only about one farm in ten throughout this section is mortgaged, most of these incumbrances being for comparatively small amounts. It is worthy of note that in Washington and Benton counties, however, approximately one-third of all the farms are mortgaged. This is the most progressive part of the section which we are discussing, and it is evident to anyone familiar with the farming in the region that the farms in those counties where the mortgage debt is lowest are kept in a state of low productivity because starved for the necessary capital to construct improvements or purchase livestock and other equipment. Since the prevailing rate of interest has been 8 and 10 per cent, it is not strange that this condition has prevailed. Federal Farm Loan Associations have been established quite generally through this district and loans in considerable amount are being made.¹ Up to the present time these have been quite largely for the refunding of existing mortgages and very little in the way of more generous capitalization of the farm enterprise has been undertaken. Doubtless this condition will gradually improve, but the rank and file of these small farmers are too conservative to get an aggressive business man's point of view with regard to their capital needs and opportunities.

¹There is an evident correlation between the quality of the land resources, the character of the farmers, and the amount of capital which they are making available for the development of their farm business. Thus the best counties in this group were the ones which took most immediate and most extensive advantage of the Federal Farm Loan system. Benton County with \$209,606 of loans (October, 1918) ranks first among all the counties of the state, Washington County second (\$197,270), Carroll County ninth, Cleburne twenty-fifth, Searcy thirty-third, Madison forty-third, and so on. Baxter, Izard and Stone counties are very rough and agriculturally inferior, have a relatively backward farming population and constitute three of the four counties in the state which have secured no loans up to the present time under the Federal Farm Loan system.

WEST ARKANSAS.

Land tenure in the hill counties of West Arkansas is in many respects quite similar to conditions just described in the hill section of North Arkansas. At the southern end of the region, we encounter plantation conditions in the Red River bottoms and the black land area which extends northeastward in Hempstead County. For this reason, the four counties in the southwest corner of the state have been excluded from this group. However, we should bear in mind that a considerable part of the area even of these counties is characterized by the small-farm conditions which obtain in the adjoining group and which are shown statistically in Table 4.

The average size of farmers' holdings here (87.6 acres) is considerably smaller even than that found in North Arkansas (115.1 acres). The improved acreage also is considerably less (34.0 as against 42.3 acres). Taken as a whole this is the least progressive or at least the most poorly developed section of the state. However, it contains some excellent resources, and where railroad facilities are available, is expanding its agricultural industries, especially truck growing and the raising of livestock. These small hill farms have been devoted almost exclusively to corn and cotton in the past, but now are finding that they can both increase their returns and improve the fertility of their land by increasing the number and raising the quality of their cattle and hogs, and by giving more attention to the production of fruit and vegetables for shipment to the northern market.

It will be observed that the average size of farms is greatest in the rough, mountain counties and least in the border counties toward the river valleys, whereas the area of improved farm land per farm is smaller in the former and larger in the latter case. (Compare Montgomery and Polk with Sebastian, Logan and Yell counties). Generally speaking, the number of farms of more than 500 acres is less here than in North Arkansas, but Sevier county is conspicuous by reason of containing 22 such farms, 10 of which exceed 1,000 acres in size. It should be added that Hempstead county has 22 farms of over 500 acres; Little River County has 17; Lafayette, 32; and Miler, 30. Of these 99 large farms, 33 contain 1,000 acres or more. This is one of several respects in which the southwest portion of Arkansas exhibits characteristics noticeably similar to the land tenure conditions of Texas.¹

The majority of the farms of this section are, like those of North Arkansas, too small to permit of adequate financial re-

¹Of course these large farms in the Red River counties are in addition to the large plantations which are also numerous in that section.

TABLE 4.
FARM TENURE IN WESTERN ARKANSAS.

	Sebastian	Logan	Scott	Yell	Perry	Saline	Garland	Montgomery	Polk	Sevier	Howard	Pike	Hot Springs	Average	
Average size farm.....	66.8	76.0	95.3	69.6	68.9	93.6	97.4	109.2	109.5	98.9	79.5	86.5	87.9	87.6	
Acres improved	40.3	40.2	34.9	35.4	31.9	31.9	28.7	29.5	31.6	39.7	36.8	29.9	31.8	34.0	
Farms over 500 acres.....	14	10	10	20	5	13	14	8	6	22	4	17	7	11.5	
Per cent of all farms.....	.4	.2	.4	.5	.4	.5	.8	.4	.3	1.0	.2	.9	.3	.5	
Typical size farm.....															
Smallest size common.....															
Largest holdings															
Per cent tenants 1910.....	50.9	45.2	37.2	54.2	47.2	32.6	23.4	27.2	22.5	37.1	41.5	33.1	26.7	36.8	29.0*
Per cent tenants 1900.....	50.4	48.8	38.1	52.5	50.8	30.6	22.3	25.6	23.3	37.7	39.5	21.1	23.1	35.7	26.3*
Per cent tenants now (estimated)															

*Average for seven counties only: Montgomery, Polk, Pike, Scott, Garland, Hot Spring, and Saline.

turns with current methods of utilization. This is being remedied to a certain extent by the addition of more livestock, but the most profitable development of the livestock industry in this section would call for many more farms of 320 or 640 acres; even the 1000-acre place is not a large enterprise on this cheap, rough land. Such a movement, however, proceeds but very slowly. Greater progress is being made, especially in the southeastern part of this region, in the development of the fruit and truck industry. Co-operative shipping associations have been formed, and spring vegetables, berries, watermelons, cantaloupes, peaches, sweet potatoes, and early Irish potatoes are produced in considerable quantities. In a great many cases these products are grown by the general farmer for his cash crop, either in connection with or in lieu of cotton. This means that the movement will have little if any effect upon the size of farms. In a few instances, however, such types of production are developed on larger tracts upon a more ample commercial basis. A 3,000-acre peach orchard in Pike County claims to be the largest of its kind in the world.

A glance at Fig. 2 will show how large an area of land in this section is still in the hands of the government, either in Forest Reserve or open to homestead entry. Timber companies also have considerable holdings in this same general vicinity. A single company holds 270,000 acres in Pike and Clark counties. Many so-called farmers in the rougher timbered portions of this section content themselves with very limited crop acreages and get most of their cash income from the timber companies or from the timber products of their own land.

The timber companies of this portion of the state do not appear to exert any considerable influence toward the monopolization of land or a disposition to hold it out of use for speculative purposes. Quantities of rough land are for sale at \$5 to \$10 per acre, but the movement of population toward these opportunities is by no means rapid. It might perhaps be suggested that, even though the prices now asked for these lands are entirely justified by their productive capacity, the present vendor is often a real estate dealer or other middleman, who acquired them from the timber company at a much lower figure. Or, where they are offered direct, the price is sometimes more than that paid by the timber company before a valuable and profitable crop of lumber had been removed.

Developed lands in these counties sell at about \$50 to \$60 except in the case of especially good soil, which commands as much as \$100 or occasionally \$125. Bearing orchards attain a maximum of about \$200 per acre.

TENANCY.

The statistics of tenancy in Western Arkansas are not markedly different from those of North Arkansas. If we take the seven distinctively hill counties (see last column of Table 5), the figure is almost identical with that for the 15 counties in Table 2—29.0 per cent for Western Arkansas and 29.4 for North Arkansas. On the other hand, if we take the four northern counties of this group, Sebastian, Logan, Yell, and Perry, we will find the higher tenancy figures characteristic of cotton production in the river-bottom sections. The percentage of tenancy in these four counties ranges from 47.2 to 54.2, while Hempstead and Sevier counties at the south end of this group partake sufficiently of the character of their neighbors to the south and east to show 37.1 and 41.5 per cent of tenants, respectively. Between 1900 and 1910 the only one of these counties which showed a marked tendency toward an increase in tenancy was Pike County, which rose from 21.1 to 33.1. This was probably due to the influx of population, which brought an increase in the number of farms. Persons who are familiar with conditions here believe that this tendency toward increasing tenancy will not be continued and that probably the percentage will be lower at the next census date, owing to the purchase of land by newcomers who first rented land and afterward purchased.

FORM OF TENANCY.

When we turn to examine the form of tenancy, we find a marked contrast to the conditions existing in North Arkansas and indeed in most parts of the state. Cash-tenants are found in rather large numbers in most of these counties. Their number is more than one-tenth the number of share tenants in all but four counties, is over twenty per cent in five, and in two—Sebastian and Perry—amounts to 51.6 and 56.0 per cent, respectively. In several of these counties also the number of share-cash tenants is likewise large.

This high percentage of cash renters is to be explained for the district as a whole by the general custom of renting truck lands for cash. The particular circumstances of Sebastian and Perry counties are probably due to a somewhat greater degree of diversification of crops which is practiced in this section and which does not lend itself readily to the conventional share arrangements. As a matter of fact, however, persons familiar with the agriculture of this section are a good deal puzzled to explain a high proportion of share renting in a manner satisfactory even

to themselves and some of them are frankly skeptical as to the correctness of the census figures.

The amount of cash rent paid in this section varies from \$5.00 per acre to \$10 or \$15 in the case of superior truck land. The share contract is the conventional one-third of grain and other field crops and one-fourth of the cotton. Leases are oral except in the rare cases in which they are to run for several years. Supervision by the landlord in any helpful sense is extremely rare, but his insistence upon a certain acreage of cotton is one of the features of the system. Satisfactory tenants commonly remain on the same place for three or four seasons and occasionally much longer.

MORTGAGE DEBT.

Mortgages are more frequent here than in North Arkansas, though the proportion is lowest in the hill counties and highest in Sebastian, Logan and Yell. Even in these three there are only about twenty per cent as many farms mortgaged as the number of those that are clear. The higher prices of farm products during the war period have facilitated the reduction or paying off of a considerable number of mortgages and an active interest has been taken in the Federal Farm Loan Association. To some extent this agency is being used to make possible the financing of more or better livestock and equipment¹, but to a large extent the small farmer sees in it merely a means of lowering his interest charge and sooner getting out of debt. The salient factors of the mortgage situation here are three: first, the small owner's fear of a lien on his land; second, the relatively small circulating capital which they employ; and third, the South's habit of financing current needs through seasonal crop liens rather than by a mortgage on land.

SOUTH ARKANSAS.

Turning to South Arkansas, we pass from the hill section of the state to the Coastal Plain region. This transition is accompanied by considerable differences in the character of the agriculture and the conditions of land tenure. Fruit and truck growing diminish in importance and cotton and corn assume pre-eminence, though livestock is here, as in the hill sections, an im-

¹Only one county from this group ranks high in the list of loans thus far completed in the various counties of the state. This is Sevier County, which takes eighth place with a total of \$116,390; Yell County comes next, holding seventeenth place with loans amounting to \$69,250. The others range from \$2,500 to \$41,700. Only three of the thirteen counties in this group exceed \$30,000 of loans.

TABLE 5.
LAND TENURE IN SOUTH ARKANSAS.

	Grant	Dallas	Cleveland	Bradley	Calhoun	Ouachita	Nevada	Columbia	Union	Average	Ashley	Drew	Lincoln
Average size farm.....	83.1	113.8	98.9	99.7	102.6	112.9	98.1	97.9	118.7	102.9	68.4	86.2	72.2
Acres improved	29.7	34.6	36.0	33.6	34.2	42.6	45.3	40.9	42.8	37.9	31.0	34.6	32.7
Farms over 500 acres.....	6	25	21	13	8	43	24	29	77	27.3	29	56	30
Per cent of all farms.....	.4	1.7	1.1	.9	.6	1.9	.8	.8	2.2	1.2	.9	1.6	1.0
Typical size farm.....		160		80-120	160	80-160	120-160	160	160-240			80-160	
Smallest size common...		60-80		40	40	40	80	40-80	40-80			40	
Largest holdings		1000 [†]		500-1000 [†]	6000	1000-5000	1000-2000	35000-60000	5000-6000 [†]		* [†]	8000 ^{*†}	* [†]
Per cent tenants 1910....	20.7	25.5	33.4	21.8	22.5	32.9	36.6	37.1	33.5	29.3	59.2	57.4	68.7
Per cent tenants 1900....	23.4	21.0	27.2	26.0	25.0	32.9	31.8	33.7	26.7	27.5	59.3	54.0	62.5
Per cent tenants now (estimated)		22			21.0	30.0	32.0	31.0	30.0				

[†]Indicates timber holdings.

*These counties also have large plantation holdings.

portant and expanding industry. We pass also from a section predominately white to one in which the negro farmer plays a considerable part. Even Grant County, which partakes least of the general characteristics of this group, has according to the census of 1910, 11.4 per cent as many negro farmers as white. A second group of counties, including Bradley, Dallas, Cleveland, Nevada and Calhoun, shows a percentage of negro farmers ranging from 33.6 to 49.5 per cent, and in Union, Columbia and Ouachita counties the number of negro farmers amounts to 60.4 per cent, 68.5 per cent and 129.1 per cent respectively of the number of white farmers. These figures should be contrasted on the one hand with strictly white mountain counties like Scott, with one negro and 2,383 white farmers, or with Marion, Baxter and Cleburne counties, which had not a single negro farmer at the last census. On the other hand, they should be contrasted with the black delta counties such as Desha, in which the number of negro farmers was in 1910 nearly eight times that of the white farmers.

Miller, Lafayette and Hempstead counties, on the west, are omitted from this group and the figures for Drew, Ashley and Lincoln on the east, are given separately in our table owing to the fact that the statistics in these counties are influenced by the existence of plantation conditions in the river bottom section. The upland portions of these counties, however, present conditions similar to those in the adjacent counties for which figures are presented in Table 5.

The interior of this region is an enormous timber area, constituting one of the most valuable sources of southern yellow pine which the country still possesses. The relation of timber holdings to our land tenure problem will be discussed shortly, but here we may merely mention the fact of sparse population and limited agricultural development to be found in the timber counties. For example, in Calhoun County only 33.6 per cent of the total area of the county was included in farms in 1910 and of this only 33.3 per cent was classed as improved farm lands. This means that only 11.2 per cent of the county was improved farm land. Practically the same condition maintains in Grant, Bradley, and Dallas counties which have 10.7, 11.3 and 11.5 per cent of farm land respectively. The oldest and best developed section is found to the west, in Nevada, Columbia, Union and Ouachita counties, which show 70.6 per cent, 69.1 per cent, 62.0 per cent and 55.4 per cent of their total area embraced in

farms and 32.6, 28.9, 22.4 and 20.9 per cent respectively as improved land in farms.¹

While, as has been said, this is a cotton-growing section, and has a considerable black population, it is not characterized by plantation conditions. However, it departs considerably from the small-owner type of farming which is found in the hill sections. The census figures are decidedly inadequate to show this difference, inasmuch as a "farm" in their definition is the amount of land actually worked by an individual or family, and not the amount which is operated under a single business management. Thus, for example, the holding of a man who owns 240 acres of land of which 160 is in crops worked by himself and three tenant families will not appear in the census as one farm but as four, one operated by the owner and three by tenants. This entirely obscures the true nature of this type of tenure, which is common in the section under discussion and very significant for our present purpose. Many of the older settlers in this region found it relatively easy in the past to acquire moderately large tracts of land through homestead entry or purchase at a low price. At first only a very small portion of the land was cleared and cultivated and the remainder used only for such pasturage as it would supply. In the course of time, and particularly under the stimulus of better prices, more and more of this land has been cleared and put in crops, while remaining in the possession of and under the general direction of the original owner, who secures his labor partly from his own family, partly from hired help, partly from renters, and partly from croppers.² Instead of selling off the land which was a surplus above the amount which they could themselves cultivate, this better class of farmers have often bought more land as they have seen the possibility of expanding their operations and enlarging their profits through the utilization of the inferior classes of labor which they found avail-

¹Since the date of these census figures, lumber companies have been actively engaged in cutting the timber in many parts of this region and their cut-over lands have to some extent been taken up as farms. Speaking for Union County, a student says: "Of the 30 per cent not devoted to productive agriculture about two-thirds has until a very recent date been timber land, but since a large sawmill company has been especially active in making this into lumber, the percentage has increased so rapidly that now not over 10 per cent of the total area retains its timber. Just to what use this new cleared land will be put cannot be conclusively stated, but there is a desire to turn it immediately into agricultural production and usually on a large scale." On the other hand, it should be noted that the coming of a railroad and the opening of sawmills very often operates to reduce the area of land in farms. Thus seven of these nine counties showed an aggregate loss of 110,429 acres in farms between the census of 1900 and that of 1910. Doubtless many farmers sold the timbered portion of their holdings to the lumber companies, and in not a few cases they themselves went to work in the mills on whole or part time. All these counties showed a gain in population during the decade, but the most distinctly timber counties experienced a loss in the number of improved acres in farms as well as in their total farm area (Bradley, Calhoun, Dallas, and Grant counties).

²For the distinction between these two classes, see p. 71.

able, both white and black. This group of farmers is the one which resembles most closely the more progressive type of business farmer to be found in the corn-belt or other good agricultural sections in the United States. An examination of the figures in Table 5 will show further that this section has a relatively large number of farms in the larger size groups, particularly those of 500 acres or more. To a considerable extent these large properties are at present but slightly developed, but the prevailing impression in the neighborhood seems to be that these larger holdings, particularly if devoted primarily to livestock, will offer one of the most attractive fields for profitable development, and that their number at the next census will be still larger. Up to the present time, there has been no stock law in these counties, and a man's holdings tended to exceed his crop acreage to only a relatively limited extent. Now, however, a considerable number of farmers realize that satisfactory development of the livestock industry cannot proceed without fencing of the land and systematic development of its pasture possibilities. As a large part of the area is characterized by a rather thin, sandy type of soil, such a development would call for comparatively large farms.

The average sizes shown in Table 5 do not differ markedly from those already presented for the northern and western portions of the state, but are to be interpreted as showing the size of individual "workings" rather than of holdings, as has already been explained. However, it will be observed in the figures for the improved farm acreage that the averages run distinctly higher in the last four counties of our list than in the first five. This reflects both the better agricultural development in the former and the movement for more livestock, and the tendency will doubtless be even more marked in the future.

TENANCY

The percentage of tenancy in the timber counties runs at about the same low level which has previously been noted in the case of the hill counties. It is markedly higher, however, in Ouachita, Nevada, Columbia and Union counties, and has shown a tendency to increase, owing to the fact that much of the development of this section is brought about by putting into cultivation the waste land already included in farm holdings, through the aid of renters or croppers. The percentage of tenancy at the present time as given in the table is based on estimates secured from residents of the section, and the writer very greatly doubts that the reduction in tenancy will be as great when the

next census figures are available as is here suggested. Undoubtedly, however, there has been a real movement toward the acquiring of land by farm tenants during the recent era of high prices.

FORM OF TENANCY

The census figures do not permit of distinguishing between cropping and renting on shares, but investigation in the field seems to indicate that there is a considerable body of negroes and inferior white farmers who cause the proportion of share croppers to be large. The better grade of both blacks and whites have some equipment of their own and are therefore in a position to rent "on the third and fourth." Some of these are on the road toward cash renting and eventual ownership. One notable fact is that in the better counties a substantial number of cash renters are to be found. In Nevada, Union, and Ouachita counties cash renters number 11.3, 25.3 and 47.0 per cent respectively of the number of share tenants.

It might seem that war prices would tend to facilitate a rapid shift toward cash renting. This tendency is discernable but its extent is slight. A resident of Union County states the deterrent influences as follows: "In times like the present, farm owners had rather have share croppers because a larger income is thus derived from the land, owing to the high prices of farm products. On the other hand, when prices are not so high, a cash renter has a larger risk to run and a majority of our farm workers are willing to avoid this by contracting for a certain portion of the crop. These two factors help immensely to keep the share system in the lead." Even in the presence of cheap lands the average share renter or cropper is unable to take advantage of this war period of unusual prosperity to better his position, because in most cases he is unable to finance himself for even the one season necessary to make this transition. The system of "store furnishing" still has a strong hold in this region and its effects will be discussed under the next section heading. Probably, on the whole, the movement from cash renting to ownership has been greater than that of croppers and share tenants to cash tenancy.¹

¹A planter of this section told the writer quite recently that war prices had made many tenants dissatisfied with the payment of one-half the crop where mules and implements were furnished by the landlord, and that a considerable number of them had got ahead sufficiently to purchase their own equipment and change to the third and fourth basis. As to results, he was quite positive in the assertion that they were "no better off—generally worse," in view of the prevailing prices of mules, machinery, and feed.

Cash rentals vary considerably, but the owner who has been accustomed to receive share rent of one-half or one-third and one-fourth of the crop is likely to demand a rather high rent in cash. The writer found rates of \$6, \$8, and \$10 per acre for lands which were good but by no means extraordinary, while rather thin lands were renting for \$3 and \$3.50. Nevertheless, the selling price of lands in this section has been only about \$5 to \$15 in the rough and \$10 to \$25 with ordinary improvements. The best lands rarely exceed \$50 or \$60. Such a low rate of capitalization of its rent is characteristic of Arkansas lands and will be discussed in its general aspects later in this bulletin. It should be observed here, however, that prices have risen rapidly in the last year or two under the combined influence of better farming and war prices, particularly the latter. The holding price of cut-over lands has been advanced by one-fourth or even one-half of the former figures, and farms in some of the developing sections have been resold within a few months at an advance of from one-half to two-thirds.

MORTGAGE DEBT

In the matter of mortgages the figures offered by the census show a wide variation. Of the farms which furnished reports, Grant County is lowest with 14.5 per cent of mortgages, and, incidentally, a very poor agricultural development; and Union County is highest with 31.3 per cent and a progressive agriculture. However, these figures must be used with the utmost caution. The disparity in usage between the word "farm" as employed by the Census Bureau and as used by various individuals at different times constitutes one element of error or uncertainty. Besides this, we must remember that in many Southern states rural financing is handled through the instrumentality of a chattel mortgage or a crop lien rather than an incumbrance on land. South and East Arkansas differ from the northern and western sections of the state in the prevalence in the former of the system of store furnishing. Consequently we must bear in mind that much of the debt burden borne by the farm operators of the section we are discussing is not revealed in the census figures for mortgage debt.

Rates of interest have been very high here—8 to 10 per cent, with additions for commissions and expenses in many cases. Likewise, the time for which loans are made have been short. The one-year mortgage is a characteristic institution in this section. Many such loans are made by the banks, which have grown up from the private loan operations of local capitalists and are still organized as state banks and trust companies. Their

loan operations are of a highly personal character and a favorable view of the usage above referred to would present it in the light of a personal relationship of helpfulness on the part of the banker toward a client of limited business ability. The latter, let us say, has been loaned money for the purchase of land, but is not regarded as responsible to administer his financial affairs wisely over a period of years, during which no outside pressure is brought to bear. Therefore, the whole debt is made to fall due at the end of one year, and the banker can then apply such pressure as he deems necessary in the particular case to secure such reduction in the amount of a loan as he thinks is proper in view of the character of the crop year and the level of prices at market time. A new one-year mortgage will then be made for the unpaid balance of the loan.

The dark side of this story is to be seen in the fact that a borrower whose operations are being conducted wisely with reference to the future may find himself suddenly forced to sell out to meet his loan, owing to a stringency in the money market or the caprice of the banker.¹

Several mortgage companies have been active in this region, their terms generally being the same as those mentioned above except that the time was 3 to 5 or, occasionally, seven years. In many cases, the banker acted as broker for some such outside mortgage concern.

The Federal Farm Loan system is establishing itself, though somewhat slowly, in this section. This slowness is due to several causes. Where farming is best, it is in the hands of planters, merchants, and bankers. These parties are able to finance their operations from private sources and feel very skeptical concerning the ability of the small farmers to operate the Farm Loan system successfully. Doubtless there is a considerable portion of the small-farming population of this section whose members are too far down the scale of education and business ability to constitute a practicable membership for local loan associations. In some districts they went into the scheme with the idea of borrow-

¹A striking illustration is that of a young farmer who was paying for a place under the arrangement here discussed and attempting to turn his farming toward livestock growing, for which the section was well adapted. In the fall of 1914 his small crop of cotton at the low prices then prevailing gave him barely enough money for personal expenses. His loan, which had been running for three one-year periods with small annual reductions, was then called in full by the bank, which claimed that the shortage of funds owing to the demoralized cotton market made this action necessary. The conclusion of the whole matter was that the young farmer had to sell at a very low price nearly the whole of the herd which he had been building up with such difficulty. The efficiency of his farming has been seriously impaired ever since. It may be added that the cattle were purchased at this low price by the vice-president of the bank, and that the young man was one of the prime movers in the establishment of a Federal Farm Loan Association. It would perhaps be too much to say that such a case is typical, but it is certainly representative of conditions which are all too common.

ing the full value of their farms and then of unloading their property on the Government.¹ Of course this class of borrowers has been weeded out by the fifty per cent limitation of the law and the careful scrutiny of the federal appraiser. That portion of the population which actually does succeed in meeting the requirements of the law makes up the small but solid middle class (below the town banker and planter and above the ignorant hill farmer or tenant) which the proper agricultural development of the region so much needs. It may be hoped that association with the just and strict but generous and helpful agency of the Federal Farm Loan system may be a means of educating this class in good business practice and of advancing their economic status.

At the present time (October 1918) there are twenty-three local loan associations in the twelve counties included in Table 5. Their loans run from a minimum of \$12,050 in Grant County to a maximum of \$126,560 in Nevada County. If we rank the volume of loans in the various counties of the whole state we will find the twelve South Arkansas counties standing as follows:

	Volume of Loans.	Rank.
Nevada County	\$126,560	6th
Columbia County	71,310	15th
Union County	67,580	18th
Dallas County	63,580	21st
Ouachita County	59,790	23rd
Ashley County	49,155	27th
Drew County	36,570	34th
Bradley County	30,800	38th
Calhoun County	24,050	45th
Lincoln County	19,900	51st
Cleveland County	13,650	56th
Grant County	12,050	62nd

Besides the actual volume of loans which it has made, the Federal Farm Loan system must be credited with a considerable regulating influence upon competing private loan agencies. These

¹A local banker remarked to the writer that men of his class who had been familiar with local conditions from their boyhood found it impossible to continue loan operations on these lands over a period of years without gradually acquiring a considerable amount of land. He therefore felt that were any outside agency to attempt to make loans on property of this class without this long personal familiarity with the peculiar conditions of the neighborhood they would almost invariably find themselves the unwilling possessors of a still larger proportion of the property on which they had loaned. As long as the present trend of prices for farm products continues this danger will probably not be acute. However, in case of a marked decline in prices in the next few years, it is entirely conceivable that some foreclosures would have to be made even under the Federal Farm Loan system.

have been induced to lower their rates in some places from 10 to 8 per cent or from 8 to 7 per cent, and to lengthen the time to 8, 10, or even 12 years.

TIMBER HOLDINGS.

Although all sections of Arkansas contain considerable areas of timber land, it is in connection with Southern Arkansas most particularly that timber company holdings become a significant factor in the discussion of land tenure. Several references have been made in the above paragraphs to the existence of large holdings in the counties of Southern Arkansas, and it may be well at this juncture to go into a more extended discussion of these holdings.

In the mountainous sections of the state, where hardwood forests predominate, the cutting of timber by the settler or by timber companies has been progressing gradually from a very early time and still continues alongside or even in connection with agricultural use of the cleared or partially cleared land. In the pine forests of South Arkansas and in the timbered regions along the overflow bottoms of the Mississippi conditions were different. In the southern counties, which we have been discussing, a good deal of cutting on a small scale took place in the fertile river bottoms and in upland regions which were accessible to railroads. But there was a great interior region of meagre transportation facilities where a vast acreage of excellent timber stood practically untouched until a relatively late date. In the meantime, however, timber interests, many of them from outside of the state, were not unmindful of the potential value of these virgin timber lands, and between 1870 and 1890 large blocks of them were being quietly acquired with a view to their development after more accessible supplies elsewhere had been exhausted. Mention has already been made of the manner in which a large tract of land acquired by the state under a swamp land grant passed through the hands of a railroad company into the ownership of timber interests. In most cases, however, the large timber holdings have come into existence through the assembling of numerous small holdings acquired from homesteaders or purchasers of relatively small tracts. A second period of acquisition occurred during the period from 1899 or 1900 until about ten years ago, but since that time there has been practically no assembling of large timber holdings, owing to the fact that the field has been quite thoroughly exploited.

In not a few cases, land speculators from the East bought Arkansas land at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre before the

lumber men arrived on the scene. When the assembling of timber holdings began such speculators were able to sell out at an advance¹ of from 100 to several hundred per cent and still make a moderate price to the mill man. But nowhere did the lumber companies find better opportunities than in the overflow region of Northeast Arkansas. Here were enormous tracts of timber which had been given to the state under the swamp land grants and which they in turn had patented to the St. Francis Levee Board. This latter body sold the land in large blocks at \$.50 to \$1.25 per acre to timber companies, using the proceeds to build levees and construct drainage ditches. State lands disposed of in this manner included also considerable tracts which had been acquired by private parties in the early days largely for speculative purposes, but which the owners were unable to hold in the high tax period following the Civil War. Under these conditions one man acquired nearly the whole of Cross County at \$.50 to \$.75 per acre and a Chicago lumber company bought 160,000 acres of excellent timber, mostly at \$.50 per acre.² This tract is practically all splendid delta soil which is now selling at \$35 an acre as cut-over land.

Another manner in which timber holdings were acquired in large blocks was through the grant of lands in aid of railroad building. This was notably true in the case of the Iron Mountain Railway, whose government grants consisted of timbered lands almost exclusively, and which, although sold in considerable quantities in recent years, still remain in the hands of the company in amounts large enough to make it the biggest single holder of timber lands in the state. Regarding it the Commissioner of Corporations said in 1913: "In Arkansas the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway, nearly sixty years after the date of its grant, is still retaining over 570,000 acres, carrying a large amount of valuable yellow pine and hardwood timber. This is over 40 per cent of its total grant."³ According to the company's report for the year ending June 30, 1916, their total holdings of land in Arkansas had at that date been reduced to 433,827 acres, which they say are "practically all timbered."

While the report on the Lumber Industry issued by the Commissioner of Corporations in 1913 presents figures for the acreage of timber holdings in Arkansas, these figures are confessedly incomplete and this is particularly true in the case of the data relating to non-timbered and cut-over lands in the pos-

¹See also p. 63ff.

²Reliable authorities state that practically all of the timber lands in southern and northeastern Arkansas were acquired at prices not exceeding \$5 per acre and that the value of this stumpage was \$15 per acre even at that time.

³The Lumber Industry, Part 1, p. 242.

session of lumber companies. This report shows 13,905,000 acres of timber holdings in Arkansas. They are arranged under a group system in which it appears that Arkansas has no holders in any of the three largest groups, one in Group IV (570,000) and six in Group V (total of 791,000 acres). About two-thirds of the total, or 8,955,000 acres, is in relatively small holdings, i. e., 60,000,000 feet or less of standing timber.

Besides the land actually owned by timber companies, considerable areas have been leased to them by owners who had homesteaded or bought the land in relatively small parcels. Such leases or timber rights appear to be more common in a district extending roughly along the line of the Iron Mountain Railway from Clark County to Lafayette County than they are farther in the interior of the timber belt. Probably the fact is that many of the lands in this district passed into the hands of permanent settlers before the timber companies had begun to accumulate their great holdings, whereas these companies penetrated into the remoter sections in advance of railroad building and before the tide of actual settlement had reached these agriculturally unpromising lands. At all events, where timber leases do exist, the pace of agricultural development is set quite strictly by the rate at which the lumber companies find it possible or desirable to remove the trees. With the present opportunities presented to the farmer as a result of high prices for his products, some of the more ambitious owners of small tracts feel that they are being held back and the development of their section stifled by the mill operators.

In appraising this whole situation one should remember that the holdings of several of the companies run over into Louisiana and that some of the companies are also large holders of timber lands in distant states. Furthermore, there is a considerable tendency toward the merging of nominally separate companies through interlocking directorates, stock ownership, and the like. A special study of the whole matter of timber holdings would have to be made in order to get at the exact facts—a study, moreover, which would be well worth its cost to the state.

There has been a good deal of talk of land speculation by the companies which owned timber tracts. It is true that the majority of them are not disposing of their cut-over areas at a very rapid rate. Some are holding their lands for a second cut, some in the hope of finding oil or valuable minerals, and some because they do not seem able to find a satisfactory method for disposing of them. This question of land speculation will be discussed elsewhere. (p. 63)

EAST ARKANSAS

When we pass to East Arkansas, the sort of table which has been presented for the northern, western, and southern portions of the state is of little or no use. The prevalence of plantation conditions here makes the figures for average acreage practically meaningless in the river counties, whereas the north-eastern counties have so many features peculiar to themselves and conditions there have changed so rapidly since the gathering of the census figures as to call for separate discussion. The characteristic in which these counties most resemble one another and most differ from other sections is in their high and increasing rate of tenancy (see Table 6). The average for the six

TABLE 6.

PERCENTAGE OF TENANCY IN EAST ARKANSAS, BY COUNTIES.

County	1900	1910
Chicot	78.2	84.5
Craighead	44.3	57.9
Clay	40.8	51.3
Crittenden	85.7	88.7
Cross	65.6	71.3
Desha	78.6	84.2
Jefferson	77.5	82.0
Lee	72.1	74.7
Lonoke	56.8	68.4
Mississippi	70.0	81.6
Monroe	74.4	78.5
Phillips	77.7	81.2
Poinsett	39.1	62.6
Prairie	52.2	51.0
St. Francis	70.7	76.9
Greene	40.1	49.8

Mississippi River counties was 76.1 per cent in 1900 and 82.5 per cent in 1910, whereas the other counties, though having a lower absolute percentage, showed an even more rapid rise, viz., 56.9 per cent to 67.4 per cent. Since this section has been undergoing rapid development since 1910, it is possible that the percentage of tenancy indicated by the next census figures will be even higher. This is due to the fact that the influx of population has consisted in the case of the southern and central counties largely of negro croppers from Mississippi and elsewhere, whereas the northern counties, Clay, Greene, Craighead, and, to a less extent, Poinsett, have attracted white farmers from Mis-

souri, Illinois, Indiana and Tennessee, who have made their beginning in this section as croppers or share renters. However, they have so prospered during the last few years that a large number of them are passing into the small owner class, and for the best sections the proportion of tenancy will doubtless be lower in 1920 than it was in 1910.

The reader should bear in mind that even in the most distinctively plantation counties there are a considerable number of small owners, both black and white. Such small holders are likely to find their lot relatively hard in the older plantation sections and to meet many handicaps in the securing of supplies or credit upon favorable terms or in disposing of their crop. They are cotton farmers like their neighbors and find it difficult to raise their standard of living much above the level of tenants in the same neighborhood. They may make their houses a little more habitable or attractive, but roads, schools, and public improvements in general are the same for all. A marked contrast to their condition is to be found in the case of the small holders in the northeastern group of counties and in the rice section of East Central Arkansas. We will briefly notice these two sections and then pass on to an examination of plantation tenure.

TENURE IN THE RICE AREA.

The rice section of Arkansas lies mostly in Prairie, Arkansas and Lonoke counties, though small areas are to be found north-eastward as far as Craighead county and two small remote tracts in LaFayette and Yell counties. The principal rice district is fairly well indicated on Fig. No. 4 by the unshaded area which lies between the two parts of the plantation section in Arkansas County, thence extending to the northwest to southern Prairie and eastern Lonoke counties and to the northeast along the unshaded area as far as Craighead County, though only a small part of the land in the latter region is devoted to rice. The figures of the last census were taken at a time when rice farming in Arkansas covered only 28,000 acres of land. The acreage rose quite steadily till it reached 146,200 acres in 1917, and still further expansion has occurred in 1918. Most of this development has taken place on natural prairie lands whose buck-shot soil was held in very low esteem by cotton and corn farmers because of its "crawfishy" character. Under rice culture, however, it has proved itself so fertile as to give Arkansas an average yield of 50.5 bushels (1916) or more than five bushels above that of Texas and Louisiana and more than double the average yield of the Carolina-Georgia-Florida field. Land which formerly went begging at 50 cents an acre now sells for \$30 to \$100.

Since the beginning of the rice boom there has been a scramble for good prairie lands, both by residents of the near-by towns and by others, both speculators and farmers, from the North. Many early buyers lacked either the capital or the inclination to engage in rice farming themselves and so have been willing to sell at least part of their holdings to those who came in later with the intention of farming. The result is that there are many small owners, a considerable number of tenants who operate family farms on land rented from large owners who supplied the capital for wells and pumps, and a few large holders who have developed their properties and conduct their own farming operations on a large scale. There are also holders of large tracts of prairie land not yet put into rice, who rent their lands (at \$1.00 to \$2.50 per acre) for the native hay which it produces.

By planting both early and late varieties of rice and by having good team and machine equipment (which he employs in making hay during the slack season), the farmer in this section is in a position to handle a relatively large crop acreage. Moreover the maintenance of a pumping plant is not practicable on a very small place. Hence the individual rice farm tends to be considerably larger than the average cotton farm. Two hundred and forty acres is quite typical. Many owners of larger tracts rent part or all of their acreage to a number of tenants, whom they furnish with water from one or several large wells, the number depending on the size of the tract. In the northern part of the section, a rice farm of 1100 acres is the largest of which the writer could learn. For the South, there are several of from 2000 to 3000 acres each. Probably the largest single rice farm in the state is found in LaFayette County. This consists of 4000 acres of rice on a 9000-acre holding. It is curious in that it is the only rice farm in the section and was not developed on a prairie but on cut-over land, cleared by dynamite and now farmed with big tractors. There were originally two partners in the enterprise but it is now in process of passing into the hands of one of these men.

Tenant farms run from 80 or 100 acres up to 360 acres in most cases, though the farms at the upper and lower limits of this range are relatively uncommon. Many Germans, Slovaks and other immigrants have settled in this section. They are hard-working, frugal, and eager to own land. As a result, there are a considerable number of cases of small ownership¹ among them. Indeed, not few of these people have acquired good sized rice farms.

¹They sometimes begin with tracts as small as 40 acres and gradually increase the acreage by purchase from non-resident owners.

Share cropping is not a form of tenure which is in vogue in the rice section, but share renting has been very common. Since rice farming is not bound by the old customs such as have become established in cotton farming, and since many of both tenants and owners have come from outside the state, the verbal lease has been superseded by written agreements, and the landlord's share differs considerably from case to case. The landlord's share runs as high as two-fifths and as low as one-fifth or even one-sixth, depending on the character of the land and the provision of a water supply. Tenants almost universally supply their own teams, implements and feed. Even the lower of these rates provides an excellent return to the owner in a section which produces from 40 to 60 bushels of rice to the acre, and tenants have been making every effort in the last few years to rent for cash or to buy land. Cash rents vary from \$3 to \$10 per acre and land can be bought at \$30 to \$100 unless exceptionally well located.

Local estimates indicate that about 75 per cent of the rice lands are operated by owners.

Capital has been relatively abundant in the rice districts and mortgage loans have generally not commanded more than 8 per cent interest. Likewise store credit and its abuses are practically absent. These facts, together with the presence of an industrious and ambitious class of workers and the absence of an entrenched capitalist class, have made this a noticeably progressive section and one in which farms of efficient size are effectively operated by their owners or by tenants on the road to ownership.

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS

The same spirit of progress and of development free from the trammels of financial Bourbonism and economic caste lines characterizes the counties of northeast Arkansas. Their economic life bespeaks an intention to "live and let live." While tenancy is prevalent, it is not ignorant share cropping; while cotton is the chief crop, negroes are absent from several of the counties and present in only a small area of the others.¹ One-crop methods have given way to a considerable degree of diversification. The standard of living is in most communities good, and even tenant houses are neat and comfortable. Landlords point with pride to the fact that the houses which they provide for their renters are painted and even screened.

¹According to the Census of 1910 there was not a single negro farmer in Clay County, one in Greene, 54 in Randolph, 69 in Lawrence. Craighead County has a predominantly white upland section, but a considerable number of negro tenants and some owners in the bottom lands.

Small owners, with farms of 80 to 160 acres, are very common and their number is increasing in these years of high prices for cotton and food products. The large increase of tenancy between 1900 and 1910 marked the influx of new comers; the next census will doubtless record the transition of many of these settlers from the tenant to the owner class. Local estimates place the percentage of ownership at present as high as 70 to 75 per cent. While experience with such estimates indicates that they are almost invariably too high, it is practically certain that the real figure is now considerably above the 50 per cent or less of owners found in 1910. Besides high prices, a moderate interest rate has assisted the small farmers in coming into possession of property. Eight and seven per cent have been the ruling rates and one large lender has carried mortgages at 6 per cent and given as long time as the tenant needed for paying out.

This latter case is one of some significance in the development of Clay county. A man of considerable wealth acquired a tract of about 20,000 acres which he has since been developing according to the best practices of modern scientific agriculture. Much of it he has farmed himself but a considerable amount has also been let out to tenants upon terms which practically assure their success and pave the way to their acquiring farms of their own. This large landlord has acted as a sort of advisory partner and the effect of his supervision has been to improve considerably the general level of farming practice in the community. As the developed farm land passes into the hands of small owners upon the favorable terms indicated above, the erstwhile owner turns his attention to the improvement of the undeveloped or less developed parts of his property.

The larger part of the timber has been removed from this section and most of the large timber holdings have been broken up. One of 60,000 acres is now being sold off and another of some 10,000 acres is offered for sale but at a rather stiff price—\$37.50 per acre in the rough. This tract is owned by a land company which is in reality a subsidiary of the "sugar trust," which originally acquired the tract as a source of cooperage stock. The Iron Mountain Railway was formerly a large holder of land in this district, but has now disposed of the bulk of its land.

The general level of intelligence and prosperity among the farmers of this section has enabled them to take advantage quite fully of the opportunities offered by the Federal Farm Loan system, and this will doubtless be another important factor in increasing the number of small farm owners. Clay County

stands third among all the counties of the state in the volume of loans secured through the Federal Land Bank (\$151,570), Craighead fourth with \$138,150, Randolph eleventh with \$83,330 and Greene fourteenth with \$75,230.

Those who are still tenants seldom have to rely upon store furnishing nor are they compelled by landlord or merchant to specialize to an undesirable extent in cotton. They are generally allowed and indeed encouraged to keep all the cattle and hogs they desire, and on this stock they enjoy the whole profit, giving only the conventional shares of the product of their cotton and grain enterprises.

There is a wide diversity of soil and topographical conditions in this section. On the thinner hill lands, particularly in the western portion, conditions verge toward these found among the mountain farmers of North Arkansas; in the river bottoms particularly along the eastern and southern edges of the district, they approach plantation conditions. Besides the eastern portion (St. Francis Valley) of Craighead County, much of Mississippi County and part of Poinsett and Cross have been developed quite recently, since the building of levees and drainage ditches has reclaimed the overflow lands. In such sections, there has been a considerable influx of outside capital and both social and business attitudes resemble less the old plantation South. In general, however, the deep alluvial soil, which tolerates almost any amount of single-crop cultivation with unskilled help, seems to breed plantation conditions inevitably, and these we find from Mississippi County southward to the Louisiana line. The situation is well described by a resident of the section as follows: "This system gives the landlord little trouble or worry. He prefers that the tenant plant the land in cotton, because it is easy for him to collect his rent when the product is sold. The tenant is willing to accept a low standard of living because such living as he does get comes easily. Any kind of a cabin is good enough for him to live in and a diet of corn and side-meat will do to eat, because he can work a little while during the summer months and loaf in idleness the remainder of the year. The landlords prefer to live in a higher and healthier climate and devote their time and energy to other productive channels, content with the fact that they have a steady income from their farm."¹

¹A very satisfactory return also under present prices. Suppose that cotton is selling for 30c a pound and cotton seed at \$60 a ton. On land which will produce a bale to the acre this means approximately \$150 for lint and \$30 for seed and the landlord's share at one-fourth would be \$45 an acre—from land valued at perhaps \$100. See also p. 69.

PLANTATION TENURE

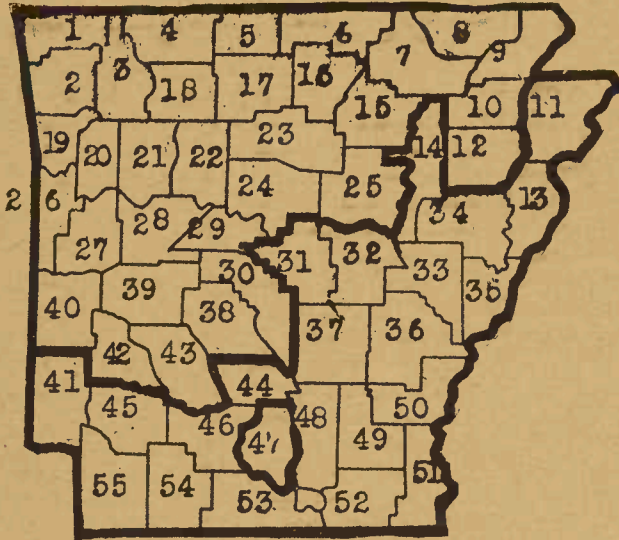
Plantation farming began with the early history of Arkansas, much of the state's pioneer development having been due to the immigration of planters with their slaves to the rich bottom lands of the Red River and the lower delta of the Mississippi and the Arkansas. Between 1840 and 1860 the growth of the plantation area was rapid. Turning to the census of the latter year, we find a considerable amount of information to enlighten us as to the conditions which obtained just before the abolition of slavery. Since the plantation was then enumerated as a single farm we may take the figures for the number of large farms as indicating approximately the number and distribution of plantations at that date. These figures are presented in Table 7 (p. 54). They would indicate that Chicot, Phillips, Jefferson, Union, LaFayette, Arkansas and Desha counties had a marked leadership in the number of large holdings, with Hempstead, Dallas, Columbia, Pulaski and Ouachita taking second rank. Slightly below these were Sevier County, with ten holdings of over 500 acres, and Monroe County with eight. Of course it must be remembered in this connection that county boundaries were considerably different in 1860 from what they are at the present time, even where the name has remained unchanged. Fig. 3 on p. 53 will enable the reader to identify the various counties as constituted in 1860.

Perhaps better for our purpose is the data showing the number of slaveholders, classified by counties and according to the number of slaves held. Table 8 on p. 55 contains this information, omitting, however, those counties in which there was no holder in the 20-29 group or above.¹ This would be approximately equivalent to five families, and is therefore fairly comparable with the arbitrary definition of a tenant plantation now in use by the Census Bureau.² These figures show Phillips, Chicot and Jefferson as distinctly the leading plantation counties, and Union, Arkansas, LaFayette, Hempstead and Desha making up a second group. If, now, we lay down the arbitrary definition of a plantation county as one which contains ten or more holders of thirty or more slaves each, it will appear that all counties of East and

¹Omitting also Carroll County, which had one holder of 20-29 slaves. Izard which had four in this group, Randolph one, and Montgomery one (but no other with more than nine). Marion County likewise had one holder in the 30-40 group but otherwise none holding more than fifteen slaves, while Perry had three between 50-99 but no other of as many as twenty. It is probable that in the case of such counties as Carroll, Marion and Montgomery that these relatively large groups of slaves were employed in lumbering operations or other non-agricultural purposes. The three large groups in Perry county probably indicate a limited amount of true plantation development in the Arkansas River bottoms. See also Franklin, Johnson, and Sebastian counties as given in the table.

²See p. 53.

FIG. 3.



COUNTY BOUNDARIES, IN 1860

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Benton | 20. Franklin | 38. Hot Spring |
| 2. Washington | 21. Johnson | 39. Montgomery |
| 3. Madison | 22. Pope | 40. Polk |
| 4. Carroll | 23. Van Buren | 41. Sevier |
| 5. Marion | 24. Conway | 42. Pike |
| 6. Fulton | 25. White | 43. Clark |
| 7. Lawrence | 26. Sebastian | 44. Dallas |
| 8. Randolph | 27. Scott | 45. Hempstead |
| 9. Greene | 28. Yell | 46. Ouachita |
| 10. Craighead | 29. Perry | 47. Calhoun |
| 11. Mississippi | 30. Saline | 48. Bradley |
| 12. Poinsett | 31. Pulaski | 49. Drew |
| 13. Crittenden | 32. Prairie | 50. Desha |
| 14. Jackson | 33. Monroe | 51. Chicot |
| 15. Independence | 34. St. Francis | 52. Ashley |
| 16. Izard | 35. Phillips | 53. Union |
| 17. Searcy | 36. Arkansas | 54. Columbia |
| 18. Newton | 37. Jefferson | 55. Lafayette |
| 19. Crawford | | |

TABLE 7.

FARMS OF 500 ACRES OR MORE IN ARKANSAS, 1860

County	500-1000	1000 and More
Arkansas	21	3
Ashley	1	1
Benton	1	---
Bradley	5	1
Calhoun	2	---
Chicot	29	19
Clark	4	---
Columbia	12	---
Conway	1	---
Crittenden	4	1
Dallas	12	2
Desha	17	4
Drew	4	---
Franklin	2	---
Hempstead	9	7
Independence	1	1
Izard	3	---
Jackson	5	---
Jefferson	30	5
Johnson	---	1
LaFayette	23	2
Lawrence	2	---
Mississippi	5	---
Monroe	7	1
Oauchita	10	1
Phillips	41	4
Pike	1	---
Poinsett	---	1
Pope	1	---
Prairie	2	1
Pulaski	10	1
Randolph	3	1
St. Francis	1	---
Searcy	1	---
Sebastian	1	1
Sevier	7	3
Union	27	8
White	2	---
	<hr/> 307	<hr/> 69

TABLE 8.

SLAVEHOLDERS CLASSIFIED BY GROUPS ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF
SLAVES HELD—1860.

	9 or less	10-19	20-29	30-49	50-99	100 to 200	200 to 300	300 to 500	500 to 1000
Arkansas	157	36	21	17	22	4	3	...	...
Ashley*	289	80	29	14	5	...	...	...	...
Bradley	227	47	20	11	6	...	...	...	...
Calhoun	103	17	9	3	1	...	...	...	...
Chicot*	93	38	18	25	33	16	1	...	1
Clark	266	47	17	3	2	...	...	...	...
Columbia	305	81	26	14	3	...	...	...	...
Conway	93	10	3	2	1	1	...	...	...
Crawford	129	19	2	2	1	...	...	...	...
Crittenden*	84	33	12	14	10	...	...	...	...
Dallas	196	79	19	13	8	1	...	...	...
Desha*	117	30	19	16	16	6	...	...	...
Drew*	276	76	20	15	6	...	...	...	...
Franklin	99	17	8	4	...	1	...	...	...
Hempstead	293	85	26	25	14	3	1	...	...
Hot Spring	103	16	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Independence	314	19	7	4	2	...	...	...	...
Jackson	210	55	20	11	2	...	...	...	...
Jefferson*	383	87	24	31	30	8	...	...	...
Johnson	142	21	6	...	1	...	...	...	...
LaFayette	155	48	25	24	14	5	...	...	...
Mississippi*	43	11	4	12	5	...	1	...	...
Monroe	105	34	23	8	8	...	...	...	...
Ouachita	450	83	30	18	6	...	...	...	...
Phillips*	312	97	40	58	32	10	...	...	...
Poinsett	96	26	4	4	3	...	...	...	...
Pope	183	23	2	1	...	...	...	...	...
Prairie	268	77	16	7	3	...	...	...	...
Pulaski*	276	55	22	11	12	1	...	...	...
St. Francis*	224	54	18	12	3	...	...	...	...
Saline	150	16	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sebastian	105	11	4	...	1	...	...	...	...
Sevier	263	54	21	12	4	3	...	...	...
Union	374	141	40	31	21	...	...	...	...
Washington	264	33	2	2	...	...	...	...	...
White	207	31	8	3	1	...	...	...	...
Yell	117	24	5	3	...	...	...	...	...

*These are also in present list of plantation counties (Table 10).

South Arkansas meet these requirements with the exception of Calhoun County (See Fig. 3, p. 53). Before attempting any detailed discussion of the meaning of these figures, we should notice the later trend of plantation development in the state.

Since the Civil War the practice of the Census Bureau has been to report tenant holdings as separate farms and the identity of the plantation as such is thereby entirely obscured. In 1910, however, an attempt was made to remedy this defect by the preparation of a special plantation schedule supplementary to the regular schedule for farms, and the publication of a special report on Plantation Farming in the United States. This report takes no account of plantations worked with hired labor, which appear duly as large farms in the general report on agriculture. This special report aims to show the facts for tenant plantations, which the bureau defines as follows:

A tenant plantation is a continuous tract of land of considerable area under the general supervision or control of a single individual or firm, all or a part of such tract being divided into at least five smaller tracts, which are leased to tenants.¹

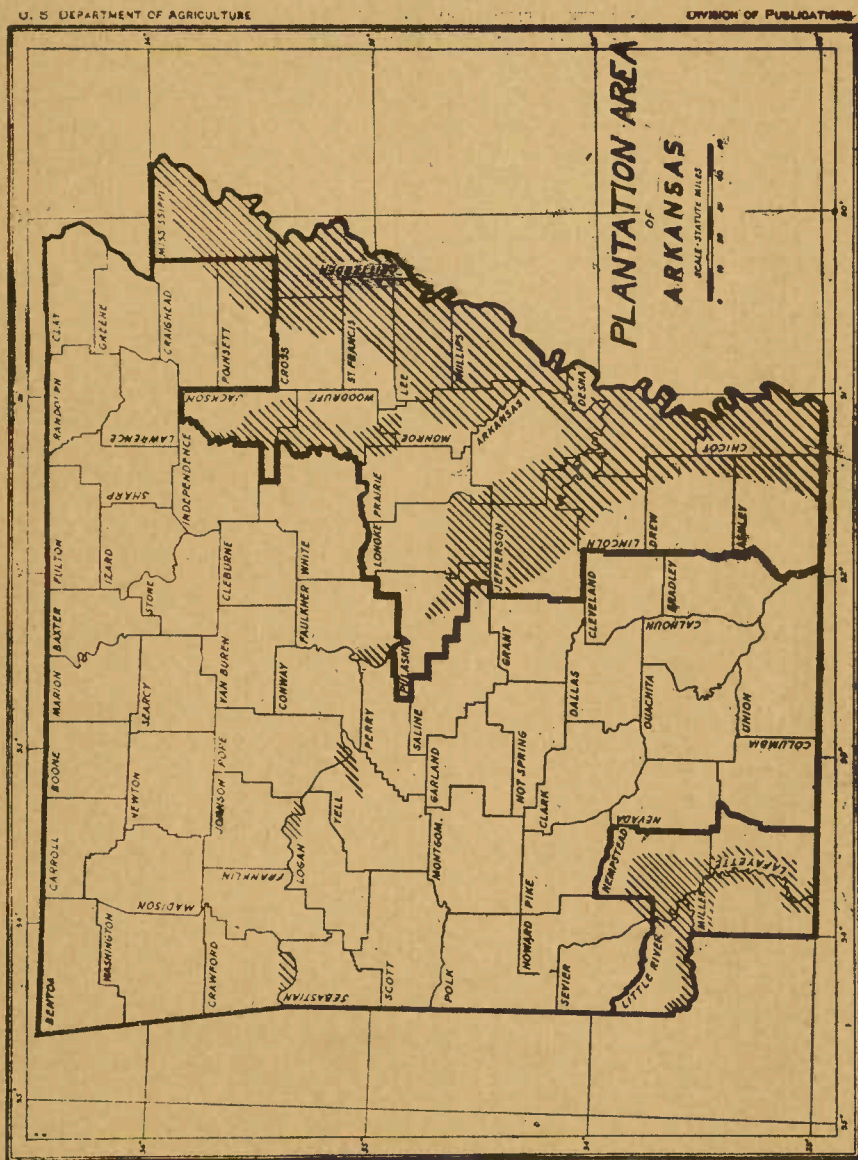
This definition, of course, excludes the holdings of the man who owns several scattered tracts, on each of which he has from one to four tenants—a type of planter quite common in the South, and whose status in Arkansas we should be glad to set forth in this discussion, were data available.

When the enumerators had filed their completed schedules the Census Bureau classified and presented these results for a "selected area"² embracing 325 counties in eleven southern states, among which Arkansas ranks seventh in the number of plantation counties (23) and sixth in the number of plantations (2,674). These are grouped as follows: 1,518 having from five to nine tenants, 714 having ten to nineteen tenants, 364 having twenty to forty-nine tenants, and 78 having fifty tenants and over. The plantations in these twenty-three plantation counties embrace a total area of 1,646,424 acres or 9.6 per cent of the state's total acreage in farms; and 1,054,049 acres of improved

¹Report, p. 13. As a matter of fact, owing to the incompleteness and inaccuracy of the returns secured by enumerators as to the degree of supervision actually obtaining on different plantations, the Census Bureau practically ignores this aspect of their definition in making up the final report. See Report, p. 13.

²The basis upon which this selection was made is not set forth in the Report, and, in response to an inquiry, the Bureau replies merely that "the selection was made according to the number of negro tenants and the production of cotton"—whatever that means.

FIG. 4.



land, or 13.1 per cent of the improved acreage of the state.¹ This would be 39.3 per cent of the improved acreage of the twenty-three counties in which this plantation area is located.

The above figures, however, by no means give a correct impression as to the concentration of the plantation type of tenure in Arkansas, by reason of the fact that county boundaries do not at all coincide with the outlines of the district actually cultivated under the plantation system. While a considerable number of small holdings are to be found scattered among the larger plantations, it is probably conservative to estimate that within the limits of the plantation area properly defined the percentage of land operated by the plantation method would be 80 or perhaps 85 per cent of the amount of improved land lying within the district. In other words, not over half of the area of the so-called plantation counties lies within the true plantation section. The actual standing of the matter can be much better understood by referring to Fig. 4, in which a heavy black line marks the boundary of the twenty-three plantation counties as defined by the Census Bureau and a shaded area indicates the zone of plantation farming as ascertained by a personal investigation in the district. It will be noted here that plantation tenure is to be found only in a district which clings very close to the river bottom lands of the Mississippi, Arkansas, White, and Red Rivers. The only notable exception to this statement is in the "black land" district which extends northeastward from the Red River bottoms into Hempstead County. Certain other small areas on the upper reaches of the Arkansas River which are likewise farmed under the plantation system, cannot readily be indicated on a map of this size.

Comparison of this map with the one on p. 53 will show a general similarity between the plantation area of ante-bellum days and the present, but with one very striking difference, viz., the disappearance of the central district of South Arkansas (Dallas, Ouachita, Bradley, Union, and Columbia counties) from the plantation classification. An examination of the statistics would also show that there has been a considerable development of plantation farming toward the northern part of the district, particularly as a result of the drainage operations which have taken place in the St. Francis River bottoms and adjacent territory, together with the removal of the timber from considerable areas in this section.

¹Since there are a moderate number of plantations outside the selected area, particularly on the Arkansas River above the limits of Pulaski County, it is evident that the percentage is actually a little higher than the one here indicated.

These two changes have brought the boundaries of the plantation area into fairly close conformity with the limits of land geographically suited to this type of agricultural organization. River bottoms, cotton, negroes and plantation tenure—here is a four-fold partnership which is not likely soon to be dissolved.¹ It is just as natural that the plantation area should show expansion in Mississippi, Crittenden, Woodruff, and eastern Poinsett counties, as it is that in South Arkansas plantation farming should recede into the river-bottoms to the east and west, leaving the south-central portion practically free of this type of tenure. While the economic annals of the state are much too meagre to furnish an adequate account of the early agricultural development, it seems fairly clear that, in the early movement of population into the state, slaveowners familiar with plantation farming in states east of the Mississippi River spread this type of cultivation pretty generally over all the southern part of the state. This carried the system into less favorable small bottoms and up into thinner hill lands after the accessible portion of the bottom lands along the large rivers had been taken up. Under a regime of free negroes and more scientific agriculture, plantation tenure has persisted and expanded in the rich and heavy delta land as fast as these sections have been reclaimed from overflow, drained, and their timber removed. But even in counties where negroes are numerous, the uplands have passed into the hands of small owners, who incline to greater diversification in crops and to the enlargement of their livestock enterprises. This fits in well with the type of operation characterized by the working farmer with two or three share renters or croppers, on perhaps 240 acres of land worth about \$20 per acre. Such a holding may be contrasted with that of the supervising planter, with 20 to 30 croppers or share renters on 800 or 1000 acres of bottom lands valued at \$75 to \$100 per acre.

In spite of the figures for average acreage of farms in the state (in which averages, plantation conditions are entirely obscured), there seems to be no reason to suppose that the extent of plantation tenure in Arkansas is either increasing or decreasing, except as additional bottom lands within the shaded area shown in Map No. 4, are made available for agricultural use. Where plantation farming has already been established it seems competent to hold its own. Well informed opinion in the plantation sections is generally agreed that there is a limited amount of cutting up into smaller tracts and occasional consolidation into larger properties, but that in general plantation tenure re-

¹The perfecting of a cheap and practicable mechanical cotton picker would undoubtedly alter this condition. But no such miracle-machine seems to be forthcoming.

mains about stationary. Three forces are at work to produce this result. In the first place, there is the marked tendency for the family whose capital is invested in this kind of business, with whose management they are familiar and from which they derive a good financial return, to hold their lands and even pass them from generation to generation. In the second place, there is the tendency for the more industrious and able members of the renting or cropping class to endeavor to get hold of small tracts of their own and gradually expand them to farms of 80 to 160 acres or thereabouts. With the prevailing prices for land, this has not been a difficult matter during the recent years of high cotton prices. In the third place, there is some tendency for the business men of the cities or larger towns, bankers, merchants or cotton factors, to acquire plantations of considerable size to be run by hired managers on a strictly commercial basis. A typical illustration of this movement is in the case of a Chicot County plantation of 25,000 acres which was purchased in the spring of 1918 by a group of Little Rock business men. An examination of the records discloses the fact that this plantation embraces five smaller plantations which have undergone a process of consolidation during the period of some years. The present owners expect to develop a considerable amount of land which, although embraced within the area of this plantation for some years back, has remained "in the rough" up to the present time. The property embraces two towns and seven gins and will probably under its new management show a highly industrialized type of management. Numerous other examples of a like sort might be cited and it is interesting to speculate whether the future of this district will witness a disappearance of the family idea or of the individual planter of large means, and the appearance of more small holders interspersed with a considerable number of very large plantations of the industrialized type described above.

If we take the census groups according to number of tenants, as a basis for examining the size of Arkansas plantations, we find that averages run as follows:

TABLE 9.

	All Classes	5 to 9 Tenants	10 to 19 Tenants	20 to 49 Tenants	50 Tenants and over
No. of Plantations.....	2,674	1,518	714	364	78
Total acres	1,646,424	494,955	418,244	497,410	235,815
Average acres	615.7	326.1	585.8	1,366.5	3,023.3
Improved acres	1,054,049	312,274	289,357	303,783	148,635
Average improved acres..	394.2	205.7	405.3	834.6	1,905.6

In general usage, the plantation of 1,000 acres or thereabouts is regarded as typical. From this size to 5,000-acre plantations are not infrequent, but above the latter size only a relatively small number are to be found. The writer knows of two of 7,000 acres, one of which is practically all in cultivation; one of 12,000 acres, largely in cultivation; one of 26,000 and another of 28,000, on both of which approximately half the land is in use; and one of 45,000 acres, though probably not over one-third of which is in cultivation at the present time, and one of 100,000 acres, reputed to be the largest in the state. There are undoubtedly others which come in this group, but even this brief list shows the range of size. It is indicated in the table above that in 1910 the 78 large plantations of the state averaged 3,023 acres each and a little less than two-thirds of this area was reported as improved. In order to get a clearer idea of the location and character of these properties, inquiries were directed to the Census Bureaus, which elicited the more detailed information presented in Table 10, and not given in the Report on Plantation Farming.

TABLE 10.
PLANTATIONS HAVING 50 TENANTS AND OVER, CLASSIFIED BY COUNTIES.

Counties	Plantations (number)			Number of Tenants	Average	All Land (acres)	Average	Improved Land (acres)	Average
	Total	Owners	Operated by Lessees						
Ashley	2	1		111	55.5	6,545	3,272.5	2,914	1,457.0
Chicot	14	6		1,146	81.9	50,421	3,601.5	27,467	1,961.9
Crittenden*	9	9		605	69.2	22,596	2,510.7	17,218	1,913.1
Desha	2	2		130	65.0	9,749	4,874.5	4,829	2,414.5
Drew	4	3		245	61.3	15,180	3,795.0	5,967	1,491.8
Jefferson	19	11		1,448	76.2	62,454	3,287.1	36,872	1,940.6
Lee	2	1		140	70.0	8,247	4,123.5	4,327	2,163.5
Lincoln	1	1		68	68.0	1,177	1,177.0	1,177	1,177.0
Lonoke	4	3		240	60.0	8,365	2,091.3	6,695	1,673.8
Mississippi	3	2		212	70.7	7,902	2,634.0	7,006	2,335.3
Phillips	6	5		409	66.8	11,621	1,936.8	11,104	1,850.7
Pulaski	3	1		271	90.3	10,840	3,613.3	6,776	2,258.7
St. Francis	4	3	1	261	65.3	8,958	2,239.5	6,276	1,569.0
Woodruff	5	5		340	68.0	11,760	2,352.0	10,007	2,001.4

This table indicates that Chico and Jefferson counties, besides being leaders in the amount of plantation farming, lead also in the number of large properties located within their borders. The relatively high proportion of managerial operation in these two counties and in Pulaski seems to hint that in the case of large enterprises the professional manager is superseding the gentleman planter who managed his own affairs. It would be instructive to know how many of these manager-operated plantations were company properties of the commercialized sort referred to on page 60. Likewise, there would be much to learn from the next census, in what it reveals as to change in conditions of tenure in the plantation region under the new influences brought about since 1910, as a result of high cotton prices, forest cutting and drainage, and the advance of agricultural knowledge and modern organization in agriculture. Unfortunately it appears that the special report on plantation farming will not be repeated as a feature of the 1920 census.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Having examined tenure conditions in the several parts of Arkansas, a few general observations may be appended, though by no means in the manner of final conclusions. The present bulletin is no more than a reconnaissance survey of a complex economic and social field, whose separate parts demand detailed study before trustworthy conclusions could be drawn or policies wisely made. A few of the issues involved may, however, here be glanced at.

SPECULATIVE HOLDING OF LAND.

It has already been indicated in the previous section that land ownership has not been concentrated to any great extent in the hands of a few large holders, except in the case of timber holders. Inasmuch, however, as practically the whole area of the state has been timbered this might suggest that speculative holding has been or still is a serious evil. A brief examination of the matter does not seem to indicate that this has been the case.¹

¹In general it may be said that even where lands were acquired in very large blocks and at very low prices, the process of breaking these up into small holdings in private hands has gone on with considerable rapidity. The case of Cross County, which was previously cited, illustrates the matter very well. Although, as was said, practically the whole of this county was acquired less than a generation ago at a price less than \$1 per acre, practically no land in the county now stands in the name of this original owner or his heirs. Of a total number of 1,297 holders in the county, 313 have holdings of 40 acres or less, 612 range from 40 to 160 acres, 253 from 160 acres to 500 acres and only 119 exceed 500 acres. These 119 large holdings include plantation lands, timber holdings, and land still undivided in the hands of individual speculators or land companies. They may further be subdivided into four groups as follows:

500—1000 acres.....	54 owners	3000—10000 acres.....	16 owners
1000—3000 acres.....	46 owners	10000—17000 acres.....	3 owners

Of these three largest holdings, one is a manufacturing company whose lands are held as a source of hardwood lumber, and the other two hold the land simply as an investment.

Generally speaking, the rise in land values has until recent years been so slow and the quantity of government land or privately owned land which was at sale at minimum price has been so abundant that there has been relatively little prospect of quick profits from the speculative holding of land. In the rice section and in the rapidly developing delta lands in northeast Arkansas this has been much less the case in recent years, and the war time advance in the prices of products has in general caused holders of undeveloped land to tighten their hold upon it, to advance their prices, and to endeavor to exploit whatever gains may be incidental to the trend of events in the future.

Two points of view are to be met with in connection with this matter of speculative holding. The farmer, who must pay a price for the land which he is to develop into a farm, regards it as a rankly speculative practice if early holders maintain a selling price far in excess of what they paid, and advance this figure whenever any new factor seems to indicate that buyers can be found now or later at such a price. On the other hand, the holders assert that prices are not speculative so long as the buyer can by reasonably intelligent use of the land recoup his purchase price out of the profits of the operation within a very few years. Both these conditions have been simultaneously fulfilled in the land market of Arkansas for some years back; land dealers, both professional and amateur, have made comfortable and often handsome profits on this turnover, while buyers have found these prices amply justified by the farming profits which they were able to reap.¹ So general a statement must of course be taken with caution and it would not apply to certain of the poorest lands nor to some of those most highly developed, notably orchard land. It has been particularly true in regions of good land which have been but slightly developed until recent years. Whether the price level to which these lands have ad-

¹Most of such gains as have come to holders of land have been limited to a rather recent period. Speaking of the late 90's an old resident says: "In those days plantation market values were gauged on what an auctioneer could get at a forced mortgage foreclosure sale. Timber lands no one wanted; they were sold at tax sales or were forfeited to the state. Bankers looked with distrust in those days at a man who owned large bodies of land; many were then called land poor." (Arkansas Gazette, August 12, 1917.) The average value of land in the state rose from \$6.32 per acre in 1900 to \$14.13 in 1910. To get a comparative figure over a period of years, we must take the average value of land and buildings, for which we have census data since 1850, as follows:

1910	1900	1890	1880	1870	1860	1850
\$17.76	\$8.13	\$7.96	\$6.16	\$4.22	\$9.57	\$5.88

Evidently one would have to go back to the boom period of the 50's in order to find a time of much profit to the speculator prior to the great advance which has taken place in the last fifteen years.

In figuring the profits of a man who has sold land at an advance, many people speak as though this whole advance were a profit, failing to deduct current interest on the capital invested, taxes paid during the holding period, commissions, etc.

vanced under war conditions will be maintained after the war remains to be seen.

We should add to this statement also the fact that most holdings even of operating owners contain a considerable portion of undeveloped land, and that quite generally this is not for sale. From the standpoint of the small farmer who would like to buy and develop land without being forced out into remote districts with few or no public improvements, this is speculative holding of a pernicious kind. Finally, we find that many holders of cut-over timber lands have no disposition to sell, or, when they do, they charge a price which is pretty stiff as compared with adjacent improved land. In general, it may be said, that the large lumber companies are not in the market with their land.

THE GRADUATED LAND TAX

So markedly is this the case in the great timber districts of South Arkansas that proposals have come from that quarter for the establishment of a graduated land tax system as a means of discouraging the holding of large blocks of potentially agricultural land out of use. In the legislative Assemblies of both 1915 and 1917 such a measure was introduced by a representative of this section, and, in spite of the opposition of the planter interests, who felt that they also would suffer under such a dispensation, lacked little of the support necessary to secure its passage. In form this was simply a resolution for a constitutional amendment, which even if passed would have had to be submitted to the voters of the state for their approval. Hence when the constitutional convention convened in the summer of 1918, the same interests became active in an effort to secure the incorporation of such a provision in their draft of a new state constitution. To win over the plantation interests and to make the measure distinctly a weapon against large timber owners, the framer of this measure so modified it as to apply only to holders of more than 2500 acres of "unimproved, uncultivated, and unenclosed lands." Likewise a period of years was to elapse before the tax would become operative, thus permitting a readjustment of holdings. The leader of the movement was confident that in this form the measure would pass, but it died on the calendar of the convention at the time of its adjournment. Indications are that the agitation will not end here, however, and certain it is that the proposal had considerable support in many parts of the state even outside of the timber belt.

Such an agitation reveals a considerable confusion in the public mind between two quite distinct issues, (1) the desirability

of getting large tracts of land now held by a single wealthy interest broken up and brought into the ownership of many persons of moderate means, and (2) the advisability of bringing into agricultural use the lands not now so employed. As subsidiary to the first of these is the issue of corporate ownership of land. In certain quarters there is in Arkansas a great fear of large corporate development and this anti-trust feeling found expression in the inclusion of a clause in the graduated land tax measure referred to above, which stipulated that "no corporation shall hereafter acquire either the legal or equitable title to any land in Arkansas except such as may be necessary for site and railway purposes." The significance of such a provision, aside from the speculative holding of land, is evident if we recall the fact that several of the largest plantations in the state are under corporate management, that the Iron Mountain Railway is a very large holder of lands, and that several lumber companies have been conducting experiments to demonstrate the feasibility of themselves engaging in agricultural operations on their cut-over lands.

The first of these issues, viz., the undesirability of large and especially of corporate ownership of land, constitutes an important and intricate problem of economics, sociology and political science, to whose solution close study must be directed in the years that lie ahead of us. Our present knowledge is by no means adequate to answer it fully, but the proper method of attacking the problem is through careful scientific investigations and not by the passage of legislation hastily drawn on the basis of amateur opinion on a question so complex and so important as this.

As for the second issue, there is room for considerable doubt that a policy of indiscriminately hastening the passage of all the undeveloped lands in Arkansas into agricultural uses would be for the best interests of all concerned. Such has been the naive assumption tacitly underlying both state and national land policies in America down to the present, but certain patent evils which have resulted cause thoughtful men today to inquire whether occupation and use should not proceed upon some different principle. As for Arkansas, we should take careful account of the character of the land and of its location with reference to markets, as well as the whole economic situation in which our country stands today and will stand in the coming years. The lands of the state range from alluvial delta soil, smooth as a floor and of surpassing richness, to sandy hills whose productive capacity can be realized only under skilful management, and, finally, to flinty mountain slopes so poor in character that

current phrase has it that they were only put in by the Creator "to keep the rest of the country from falling apart." Between these two extremes is to be found an almost infinite variety of soil and topography. Besides agricultural possibilities, we must not forget the alternative of using some of these lands as a permanent source of timber.

Such considerations have dictated the government's policy of setting aside forest reserves in the state, but to the writer it seems unfortunate in the extreme that the reserved area has not embraced a considerably larger territory than that now included. Doubtless the motives which led to the release of a part of the land first reserved (1907) were dictated by political rather than technical or economic motives. Likewise many lands which passed into private ownership before the era of forest reservation doubtless might with profit be reclaimed from the wasteful and unprofitable use to which they have been put by private owners and be employed more productively in timber and grazing development. At all events, even a cursory examination of conditions must convince any thoughtful person that leaving the matter of utilization of our lands entirely to the real estate agent, the lumber company, the ill-informed land-seeker, and the politician is productive of sorry results indeed. If there could be a careful survey of the undeveloped lands of the state by experts technically trained for the task of classifying them according to their productive possibilities, and if this survey and classification were made the basis for legislation and economic development designed to put these lands to the uses for which they are best suited in tracts of favorable size, under proper management, the future development of the state would be facilitated and its contribution to the economic welfare of the country enlarged.

COLONIZATION PROJECTS.

As a matter of fact, the holders of undeveloped lands are themselves a good deal puzzled as to what course they should pursue with regard to them. In a few cases the companies are definitely holding their lands for a second cut, but positive steps toward the maintenance of a permanent forest growth by replanting or even by the protection of natural reproduction have been attempted nowhere outside the United States Forest Reserves. As a whole the companies seem to feel that their greatest profit can be secured by exploiting their lands as "the greatest body of cheap farm lands still available to the settler anywhere in the country." Such a claim unquestionably has a considerable foundation in fact and in the case of many of the cut-over lands (of course those of the river bottoms and quite extensively for

the better grades of upland soil) the potential yield in crops is much too valuable to permit of considering for a moment their permanent retention for mere timber uses. Even on the rougher lands, orchard and pasture uses permit of tolerably intensive development. However, it must be remembered that much stands between the natural state of such lands and their profitable agricultural use—levee protection, drainage, clearing, equipment, and the providing of suitable workers and adequate supervision. In many cases health conditions need special attention. The most profitable crops and type of farm management are yet to be ascertained, and roads and schools provided. Many of the lands will not prove profitable under cotton or other uses now general in the adjacent territory, and yet they promise good returns to truck growers, horticultural development or beef, dairy, or sheep farming.

In a number of cases timber companies have inaugurated farming operations on their land, either as a means of demonstrating to prospective buyers what the land is capable of doing, or of themselves passing on into a new field of profitable business as producers of agricultural products. In several instances these enterprises have been notably successful. In others, a few years of unsuccess have been followed by the abandonment of the endeavor, and the company had lapsed back into a passive attitude toward their holdings, in the vague hope that something will turn up to create an active market for the land. Generally their desire to get a high price for their property has lead them to advertise it as suitable for a more intensive type of farming than the character of the soil will actually justify. By frankly admitting the relatively inferior character of the sandy pine flats and rocky hills and seeking to induce suitably trained settlers to come in and develop it on an extensive basis with live stock, the interested parties could eventually secure a steady, even though modest, return, much more in fact than will probably be secured by the unsuitable types of farming which have so often been advocated.

In the past, much cut-over timber land was sold out to land settlement companies or turned over to local real estate agents for sale on a commission, with no concern further than getting immediate cash return out of the land. In Northeast Arkansas several companies have sold small tracts of land to their employees or to settlers from elsewhere, building a small house and barn on each tract and accepting payment in small installments. This plan has been fairly successful, but the quality of settlers has been rather inferior as no attempt at selection was made and no subsequent guidance furnished them. They merely blundered

along with the type of farming copied from near-by practices, or brought from the communities whence they had come. The latter were often highly unsuited to the new conditions. Quite recently one of the biggest lumber companies (and one which operates a 1600-acre plantation of its own) has begun the development of a colonization scheme upon fertile land in Mississippi County, putting in improvements and selling on easy terms in tracts of about 100 acres.

While a majority of the newcomers who have settled on Arkansas land in the last decade or two have prospered, some of them moderately and many of them to an extraordinary degree, not a few others have failed ignominiously, lost all or part of their capital and left the state to spread broadcast a story of the worthlessness of Arkansas land. In some cases they have been deliberately swindled,¹ but more often these unfortunate results have been due merely to the lack of suitable organization of their effort in an environment very different from the one to which they have been accustomed. A relatively small effort on the part of the state government would do much to improve its reputation abroad and to increase its prosperity at home.

The war has appeared to many large holders as an opportune stimulus to public interest in the acquisition of land and they have seized the opportunity to advance prices as much as the traffic would bear. The writer has learned directly of several cases where cut-over lands have been marked up from \$5 to \$7.50 per acre, from \$10 to \$12.50 to even \$15 per acre, and from \$25 to \$35 per acre. In order to prevent the income tax collector from mulcting them of these adventitious gains some of these companies have restricted the size of the tracts which they will sell and the amount of money which they will accept as a first payment.

THE LEVEL OF LAND PRICES

Even the prices now charged are in the case of the better lands by no means high if measured in terms of the productive capacity of the soil. It is a notable phenomenon that the poorer lands are quite generally over-valued in proportion to those which are more fertile. Where the price is absolutely low, it seems easy to find a buyer, even though the price be relatively high

¹At the present time a gigantic fraud is being engineered in the overflow region of Southeast Arkansas, where a land company is bringing in prospective buyers in personally conducted parties so assiduously directed that they see only the advantages of the district and learn nothing of some very real drawbacks. They are housed at the company's own hotel remote from all the towns of the section, and there persuaded to buy land at \$40 an acre in the rough which will be practically valueless to them for years to come. The soil is undeniably fertile, but conditions preclude its utilization until extensive reclamation work has been completed.

as compared with what his money would buy if paid for higher priced lands elsewhere. "The curse of the poor is their poverty," and where there are many poor folk, that very fact tends to strengthen the demand for cheap lands out of proportion to the higher priced properties. In a certain county which has both bottom and hill lands, the former sell at about \$40 and the latter at \$10, but a well informed resident of the section says: "If the bottom lands are worth \$40, the hill lands aren't worth a cent."

Besides this disparity of prices within the state there is an apparent discrepancy between the level of prices here and that in other states. Taking practically all the better lands here, we find that the price represents on the average much less than the twenty or thirty times the annual product which is common in many well developed farming sections. As the economist would say, the economic rent is capitalized at an extremely high rate. As the local resident says over and over again, "we expect to pay for our land in three or four years anyway, and with present high prices it is frequently done in a single year." Out of many possible cases one will be cited as quite typical. A plantation was sold last spring for \$210,000, on which it was reliably reported that the landlord's share of the previous season's crop had been \$45,000. Here we have a rate of capitalization amounting probably to 20 per cent on the net returns. The mortgage interest on the same property would not have exceeded 10 per cent and would more likely have been 8 per cent. Why the difference?

This is a question which will repay careful study, but certain considerations are evident on the surface. Like all price phenomena this is a question of supply and demand. Plantation properties sell in a somewhat restricted market. Capitalists who are in a position to venture \$210,000 in a cotton property are not to be found upon a moment's notice. Furthermore, the supply side of the question is affected both by the proximity of raw lands and the fact that some members of the planter class who have acquired comfortable fortunes seem to look upon the present period as one favorable for selling out, and on the whole it does not appear that as a class they are hard bargainers. Furthermore, this price and income ratio is not to be compared strictly to the absentee owner's 5 per cent on his investment elsewhere. It is much more like the business man's profit, for which 20 per cent would be only a fair average rate. Plantation farming is a business in which close and skillful supervision will command large returns, but a return of 20 per cent is apparently not so high as to attract many outsiders into the business.

This observation concerning active participation in the management of rented lands or those worked under cropping methods would apply quite generally to the cotton and livestock industry of the state, and this fact operates to limit considerably the range of demand. Unquestionably these low prices present great opportunities to the purchaser who knows how to employ land well, but even in the case of small properties and inexpensive lands the outside market has been weak out of all proportion to the density of population elsewhere and the productive possibilities here. Of course there is a certain immobility of farming population which must be taken into account, but the impulse to move has also doubtless been discouraged by the absence of good roads and schools, a decrepit system of state finance, vague fears of malaria and the reports of unsuccessful colonization schemes of earlier days. In recent years these drawbacks within the state have been rapidly eliminated and land values have advanced with rapid strides. They will doubtless continue until the ratio of price to net productivity will stand in the same relation to the mortgage interest rate that it does elsewhere, the necessity for personal supervision being taken into account.

IS TENANCY A MENACE IN ARKANSAS?

To the doctrinaire social philosopher, looking at Arkansas from the outside and judging conditions from the priori belief that a high percentage of farm owners is good per se and a high rate of tenancy unquestionably an evil, there would be much to deplore in the southern and eastern counties and much to rejoice over in northern and western Arkansas. If, however, one examine the facts at first-hand and without prejudging them, he might quite possibly reverse both of these judgments. At all events, three considerations should be borne in mind.

1. The Meaning of the Figures. We must remember that the census counts share croppers as tenants. This is highly misleading whenever comparison is made between statistics of northern and of southern states. It is true the share cropper is very commonly the head of a family and in a formal sense an enterpriser, accepting the business risk involved in the production of the crop, rather than being on a contract basis for wages. Actually, however, the cropper assumes little risk, since seed, implements, fertilizer, and even food and feed are furnished by the landlord. The fact that his remuneration depends on the outcome of the season's work means merely that he is a profit-sharing worker, and if he leaves, as sometimes happens, before the character of the harvest can be ascertained, he is simply paid for

the number of days he has put in, at the customary rate for wage labor. Likewise, he frequently works for wages either for the landlord or on "public work" for part of the season. In many places at least custom has set the number of days' work which a cropper is supposed to put in for the making of a crop, and the landlord has virtually hired him for this period at a wage which consists of a guaranteed living plus a premium in case the crop yields a surplus. Very often the cropper is assigned a small patch of cotton with a cabin merely as a means of making sure that there will be on hand a supply of cotton choppers and pickers for hire on a wage basis.¹ If, now, each of these workers counts in the statistics as a tenant, the resulting figures are by no means comparable with those of a corn-belt county, where farm business men are renting 160-acre farms.

Likewise, if one goes into a south Arkansas community and makes inquiries about tenancy, he will probably be told that nearly all the farms are owner farms. That may mean that in a given 1600 acres there are, let us say, thirteen properties, four of them small owner farms of 40 acres each and nine of them 160 acre places also operated by their owners, who, however, secure the necessary labor by share cropping. The census would call this thirteen owner farms and twenty-seven tenant farms and 62.5 per cent of tenancy, but local usage can hardly be adjudged wrong in saying that all of these farms are operated by their owners, just as we would say in case nine of the thirteen employed twenty-seven hired hands on a wage basis, as is done elsewhere.

Both the smaller size cotton farms and the large plantations secure their labor from a relatively inferior class by this method, making that labor effective by supplying the necessary capital goods and supervision, in the same way that these two indispensable factors are supplied to the wage worker in well organized farming in other sections. The shiftless and ignorant class of farm workers cling to the system because it gives them a chance to work enough to get a living and at the same time relieves them of responsibility and gives them time to fish and loaf and visit. The real issue is whether they are being kept at this low economic and social level in order that they may be exploited, or whether the doors of opportunity are opened to

¹A former student of the University of Arkansas, Mr. P. A. Millar, thus described the system in use on a large plantation farm on which he was employed: "Our cotton is share cropped, each negro, though, having only eight or ten acres—enough to hold him on the farm during the season. When he is not working his cotton, he is working as a week hand on the farm. The boss has the right to say when the cropper shall work his own cotton or when he shall work the boss's crops. If he thinks best, the boss may put hands in the share cropper's cotton and charge the share cropper with their wages. Thus the whole cropping system is under direct supervision of the operator. The scheme seems to me to have many good points."

them in proportion as they manifest the ability or desire to enter a larger field of endeavor. It is not a question of formal statistics and definitions, but of what is the most productive organization of human beings and natural resources.

In considering such a question we must keep firm hold upon the technical and economic questions involved, and it is to be doubted whether the cotton acreage on which one family can do the hand work can be organized economically as a separate operating unit. This brings us to the whole question of the "economic holding," and introduces the second point alluded to above.

2. Why Tenancy May Be to the Tenant's and the Community's Economic Advantage. As said before, we must not deprecate tenancy merely because we dislike the word. What are the facts behind the phrase? Probably the truth is that an economic organization which brings from forty to fifty families together in the production of cotton would be the one which gives maximum efficiency, and that while the group may fall considerably below this limit and still prosper fairly well, some five families or thereabouts mark about the smallest really efficient unit, and the individual working alone stands at a serious disadvantage. He suffers from lack of equipment, skilled guidance, shrewd buying, and financial standing. The poorer he is, the greater his lack of education or faults of character, the more he needs the support of an organization larger than himself. To some extent he may get this through the practice of co-operation, but failing that, his actual productivity is bound to be greater as a tenant or cropper on a property large enough to be well equipped and well directed, than it is when struggling along on his own too small place.

It remains, however, for society, which benefits from this greater productivity, to see to it that not all the product above a bare living is taken by those who provide this working organization—exactly the same problem which we already have in the case of industrial labor.

3. Why Ownership May Not Indicate an Economically Desirable Situation. If, then, it should appear that certain tenants profit from their tenancy, is it also possible that owners sometimes suffer from their proprietorship? Our argument was that a fair tenant contract is economically beneficial to the one who cannot individually command the capital and special services needed for high technical efficiency. We may now look at the matter from the other angle. There are thousands of small farmers in Arkansas whose insistence on ownership simply

restricts them to the petty returns of an enterprise too small for efficiency. Outside of a few sections, notably the rice area, it may almost be said that the farming is worst where the ratio of ownership is highest and best where the proportion of tenants and croppers is large. Reference has been made in considering the hill sections of the state to the fact that many families go on year after year eking out an existence on farms of forty acres or even less of rocky land. They are independent owners, if you please, but vastly lower in efficiency and income than they would be if affiliated through a suitable rent or wage contract with the more extensive type of agriculture to which this section is preeminently adapted. Lack of capital prevents the development of such enterprises, lack of education prevents local farmers from seeing these opportunities, content with the old ways of life makes them opponents of the new organization of agriculture even when it is thrust upon them. With many of them ownership retards rather than stimulates economic progress.

THE ECONOMIC HOLDING

To be sure, much work must be done over a period of years to come before we shall be able to say just what is the most effective size of farm enterprises in the various sections of the state and with the various types of farming. But it is evident that many owners are scrubbing along on undersized farms, when a little industry and foresight would enable them to rent or buy enough additional acres to get a farm of effective size.

Mr. A. D. McNair, Farm Management Specialist for the state, has made a study of 170 cotton and corn farms in several representative localities. His conclusions, based upon actual figures, are that "it is better to be a four-mule farmer than anything smaller, and this is a size that any man may aspire to. Three farms near Magnolia, Ark., illustrate this fact quite forcibly. The first is a one-mule farm, the second a two-mule and the third a four-mule, and all had nearly the same type of farming and about the same yield of cotton per acre. The essential facts concerning these farms are given in the following table:

	Farm No.1	Farm No.2	Farm No.3
Acres in crops	20	37	92
Part area in cotton.....	3/5	3/5	3/5
Yield of cotton per acre.....	204 lbs.	204 lbs.	197 lbs.
Yield of corn per acre.....	11 bu.	25 bu.	19 bu.
Number of work animals.....	1	2	4
Number of "hands".....	1	1½	4
Labor income	\$292	\$637	\$1269

The first farmer had no 'hands' except himself and he made \$292 for his year's work after allowing a reasonable interest on his investment. The second farmer paid a 'hand' for about half a year's work and made a corresponding income of \$637. The third farmer paid three extra 'hands' and made a labor income of \$1,269. These three incomes are strictly comparable for they represent what each farmer made for his own labor and management as distinguished from what he made from his invested capital."¹

The same teaching is re-enforced if we take the whole set of figures, viz., for 170 farms in Pulaski, Lee, Phillips, and Columbia counties. These divide quite equally into six groups, from one mule to six mule farms, on which labor income varied as follows:

- Group No. 1. 21 crop acres per farm, 245 pounds of lint cotton per acre and an average labor income of \$650 per farm.
- Group No. 2 29 crop acres per farm, 224 pounds of lint cotton per acre and a labor income of \$668 per farm.
- Group No. 3 40 acres of crops per farm, 243 pounds of lint cotton per acre and a labor income of \$868.
- Group No. 4 40 crop acres per farm, 216 pounds of lint cotton per acre and a labor income of \$968.
- Group No. 5 68 crop acres per farm, 249 pounds of lint cotton per acre and a labor income of \$1,298.
- Group No. 6 122 crop acres per farm, 272 pounds of lint cotton per acre and a labor income of \$2,335 per farm.²

These facts raise several important questions as to the basis of tenure. For example, is adjacent land for sale in tracts of suitable size at reasonable figures; how is additional labor to be secured; and, perhaps most important of all, what are the credit facilities? The farmer faces a condition and not a theory, and one of the greatest services which could be rendered him at the present time would be a careful study of his real estate market and the situation within the state with reference to rural credits.

It should also be remembered that Mr. McNair's figures relate to crop acreage rather than to the size of land holdings, and in many cases it will be found that the farm which in terms of crop acreage is too small for efficiency contains a considerable

¹The Arkansas Gazette, February 17, 1918.

²Figures furnished by Mr. McNair.

area of land which is used little or not at all and which could readily be brought into cultivation. Some such holdings are farmed by methods which are not sufficiently intensive to give good results, and indeed the over-sized farm constitutes a problem of land tenure in Arkansas not less than the under-sized farm. Many holders who have bought large tracts of land because it was cheap or who have kept their properties of the size at which they stood when passed to the present holders by inheritance, now possess farms larger than their capital or ability is able to handle efficiently. Sentiment or inertia keeps them from selling part of their holdings and capitalizing the remainder more adequately, even though sound economics would dictate such a step. Or inertia and lack of suitable agricultural training keeps them from developing the whole of these properties, even in cases where they are financially able to do so.

MANY PROBLEMS

Here are problems a-plenty—problems of old plantation days, problems of new pioneer development, a wide variety due to a diversity of soil, climate, and social conditions. The state owes it to herself and to the nation in these tremendously important days of reconstruction, to inaugurate and follow out a constructive policy with reference to its land, whether forest area, power sites, mineral resources, or farm lands. This bulletin is merely a first attempt to survey the field and state some of the issues as they relate to farm land. They should be met as promptly as possible by a constructive policy which will mean in some cases legislative action; but practical measures will be safe and helpful only in proportion as they are based upon searching study of the specific problems which confront us.

